



DOR DIE

No. 7

Voices from Earth First!

"We should not be in the least afraid of ruins. They may blast and lay bare to this world before they go but we carry a new world here in our hearts, and this world is growing as we speak."

Idiotorial

Do or Die Number 7—The Maturity or Senility? Issue.

Do or Die doesn't want to be, couldn't be, nor has ever claimed to be representative of the entire ecological direct action scene. We do want to give a voice to the movement but it is inherently ridiculous to think that any one publication can be the voice of the movement. People can only represent themselves—and this idea underlies the whole theory and practice of Earth First! and its organisation into a network of autonomous decentralised groups.

Submissions are needed and welcome, so please do send in articles, but Do or Die is not completely open access as space is too short for that. It is the project of the editorial collective who, with the help of people from around the world, co-operate (!) together to produce it.

We're putting our own time and money into this and we're not going to devote it to printing things we substantially disagree with. Having said that, we are not interested in peddling some 'correct' ideological line and we will, and do, publish things we disagree with—if we think they have something worthwhile to contribute to our struggles. The exception to this is the letters pages which are more or less open access—as long as you keep the length below 500 words—so write and tell us you

love, hate or fancy us—please!

For many different reasons we would like to see more publications coming out of the movement, of which DoD would only be one amongst many. You don't need loads of money and resources to do a publication—anyone with a bit of commitment can produce one, and we're willing to give you help and advice if you want it. Don't be put

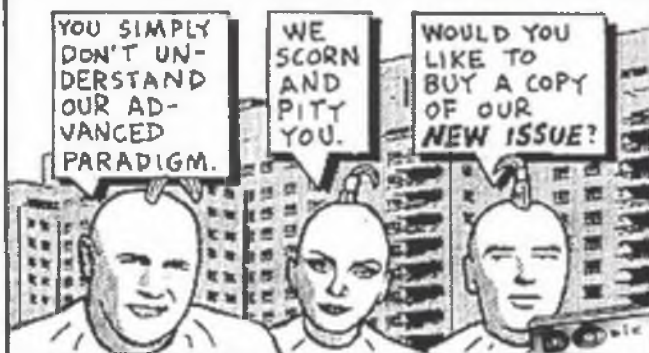
off by the (relatively) professional quality of some magazines' production—DoD started off as a badly photocopied A4 zine back in 1992. We've come a long way since then—and the body of at least one collective member may well be found washed up on Brighton beach in the near future.

We are not moving to becoming an annual journal, but for practical reasons we feel unable to produce the next issue until April 1999—see the deadline below. Beyond that issue our commitment to more frequent publication (and less of a life) still stands. All comment, criticism and discussion is welcomed—send to the address below.

Yours, seeking fresh blood for the vampire of politics

—The Do or Die Clones.

OF COURSE, DO OR DIE IS ULTIMATELY MORE THAN A MERE MAGAZINE--IT'S A WAY OF LIFE...NOT UNLIKE, SAY, THE UNIFICATION CHURCH...




Do or Die—Bogsnorkelling in the political swamp since 1992.

An Unaccountable Clique EF! production

Order and Submission

Send your articles, graphics, photos, reviews and letters to: Do or Die Editorial Collective, c/o PO Box 2971, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2TT, UK. Although not essential we would prefer all submissions as ASCII text files on PC or Mac disks. For a 4 issue subscription delivered direct to your door by a uniformed state employee send £8.00 UK/£10.00 elsewhere (cheques/PO's payable to Earth First!) Sending more allows us to send free copies to prisoners, groups and random blaggers. For bulk orders contact the above address. Back issues of DoD No.s 5 and 6 are available from the same address—send £1.50 UK/£2.50 elsewhere per copy including postage.

Remember, remember the 5th of November—gunpowder, treason and plot... and the deadline for Do or Die Number 8.



Direct Action

Six Years Down the Road



Claremont Road—resistance to the M11 in East London

The British EFi movement has been dominated over the last six years by campaigns against road-building. These seem to have had results—for instance, roads budgets slashed, miles of media column inches written, and the anti-roads “ecowarrior” enshrined as a cultural stereotype. This article discusses how successful our struggles have been, whilst also attempting to look to the future.

The wider anti-roads movement has many agendas. Many local groups and activists with no involvement in direct action have also been working harder than ever in the last few years, as have mainstream anti-road groups such as Transport 2000, Alarm UK and Friends of the Earth (FoE). Although we combine on a practical level to “stop the road” with various tactics, underlying objectives may vary from a sustainable transport policy (whatever that means!), to promotion of a lifestyle or an organisation, or to global industrial collapse. To what extent you judge the last five years to have been a success may depend on your objective.

In terms of stopping roads being built, direct activists don’t have a very good record. With some notable recent exceptions—Guildford, for instance (see box)—most roads we have fought have been, or are being, constructed. Roadbuilders don’t like publicly backing down to hippy law-breakers, however much we cost

them otherwise. Meanwhile, the English roads budget has been sliced from about £23 billion to a few £billion since 1992; nearly 500 out of 600 road schemes have been scrapped since 1989; that’s 500 places untrashed, saved—for now. These are massive cuts; Construction News wrote in May “...the major roadbuilding programme has virtually been destroyed”¹. The important question is: how much did all our bulldozer-diving, fly-posting, phone-calling, tree-sitting, media-tarting etc. contribute towards this?

A broad range of activists have been inspired by direct action protests, and road-blighted local communities have been radicalised. As one East London resident said of the protest against the M11 Link: “...all I was trying to do was defend our local bit of land. I’ve never thought of myself as political before but this has shown me that all life is politics—if you step out of line”². Nimby’s have redefined their patch, as described



by a local anti-M25 campaigner: "Our whole approach is 'not in my back yard, not in our county, not in our country and not on this planet'..." In addition, national groups have been keen to take advantage of the public interest direct action has generated. Anti-roads protest has had a huge impact on the modern green movement.

Today's EF! movement cut its teeth on fighting roads, and has thus been shaped in many ways, in terms of tactics, attitude, ambitions, and politics. The energy and activity of our movement owes a great deal to anti-road campaigns. It is important to recognise this, whilst acknowledging that different issues may need different approaches.

The roadbuilding issue has been relatively successful in creating wide debate. The broad relevance of the issue must be a factor; there were so many road plans in the early 90's that there was one near most people, and everyone's life is affected by road transport. Holes in the ozone layer, burning rain-forests, and even nuclear power stations, are much less immediate to most British lives. Road building allowed a crucial link to be made between consumer lifestyles and environmental destruction. The struggle against the M11 Link in 1993/4 added a crucial social element—resistance to the destruction done to urban communities by car culture, a mission continued by the subsequent rapid spread of Reclaim The Streets (RTS) actions.

It seems fair to link the rise in direct action with the diminishing road budget (down every year since 1993, the year of the big Twyford actions). The controversy generated by our protests has surely made this budget an expedient target for Treasury cuts, and the roads lobby has had a miserable few years as a result. Of course, the cuts are motivated by the need to save cash

more than anything else, as illustrated by the promotion of privately-financed roadbuilding, such as Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) schemes, and by Labour's approval of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) this summer.

The government has no idea what to do with the roads programme. In their rhetoric they combine the totally irreconcilable aims of economic growth and "environmental protection", trying to placate both us and their capitalist mates at the same time. Because protest has made roadbuilding such a tricky issue, the government reacts by doing (and spending) as little as possible—building few roads, hoping we'll go away, and launching reviews and consultation exercises. The roads budget would not be so small if roads got built without confrontation—and if pressure doesn't continue, the budget is more likely to grow again.

The "noisy defeats, quiet victories" scenario suggests that anti-road direct action is very unlikely to stop that particular road, but creates a climate of opinion where other road schemes are more likely to be defeated before they start. It's hard to quantify any such general link. However, pro-roads lobbyists and local green activists agree that the Twyford protests were a major factor in the scrapping of the East London River Crossing through Oxleas Wood in 1993; and that Newbury had an effect on the decision to drop the Salisbury Bypass because of its "environmental disbenefits"⁴ in 1997. In both cases the threat of large-scale direct action was there, and in the case of Oxleas, explicitly spelt out. The threat was coupled with the involvement of a wide range of mainstream groups, and a strong local campaign. (Of course, the threat of direct action often doesn't stop roads, as illustrated by Newbury....)

Victory at Guildford!

Surrey County Council had planned to widen and straighten the A320 Guildford to Woking road. The proposed work would have cut a swathe of 2/3 miles through common land, established woodland, a pond designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as entailing the felling of 221 mature trees and hundreds more younger ones.

The planning enquiry in January 1996 was the usual farce, and when, as expected, the scheme was given the go-ahead a small camp—Hairy Mog—was set up. The resistance grew and by February 1997 there were five camps along the route, fortified with tree houses and tunnels, with about 60 people living there.

Central government funded schemes are larger, both in terms of financial backing and ecological destruction done. Although not as large as Newbury, for example, the weak point of this particular scheme was that it was to be funded only by the local council. Because of this it was much more susceptible to the economic pressure of the eviction, as well as to any future pixie work that might occur when construction eventually went ahead. In May 1997, due to these financial constraints, the council abandoned the project. Victory! Over the next couple of months the camps were cleared up and the area restored to its former condition. Since then most people from the camps at Guildford have moved onto other sites around the country. For more information contact: 01483 532167.



A crucial ingredient in the "noisy defeats, quiet victories" scenario is a hungry, broadly sympathetic media. Direct action can only make roads controversial, and news consumers aware, if we get coverage. This has generally worked surprisingly well for us. An important side effect has been the elevation of the roads protester to (sub-)cultural icon status, appearing in TV and radio soap operas, in several novels, on children's TV... the list goes on. These days everyone knows that roadbuilding means dreadlocked hippies up trees, just as foxhunting means saboteurs.

This media and cultural focus on protester lifestyles and spectacular tactics helps to alienate many people from our struggles, to stereotype activists, and thus to fit the movement into a pigeonhole (or perhaps a tunnel?). Everyone's heard of Swampy, but few know what he was digging under, or why, or could relate this to their own lives. Our impact on the public consciousness has been large, but few seem prepared to get out of their car, still less to demand an ecological revolution!

Let's turn from hearts and minds to pockets. As tactics have evolved, and our mobilisation abilities grown, our power to inflict economic damage has increased. This damage doesn't just mean trashing machines etc, but also includes extra security costs, and delays to work—time is money, remember? Although costs we inflict are dwarfed by those caused by an industrial labour dispute, for instance, this is something we're quite good at. Unfortunately, our enemies are increasingly good at countering it.

There are now a host of specialists who have made a career out of trying to contain us. Individuals like John Chapman, site engineer at Twyford and then Newbury, spring to mind; he rates himself as an expert in finishing roads on time despite protests. Andrew Wilson, the Under Sheriff of Lancashire, touts for business (along with sidekick Amanda Webster) as a consultant to beleaguered contractors, with a 24-hour phoneline for those really urgent protest problems. Devon's Under Sheriff Trevor Coleman, with his recently-launched "Major Protest Unit" available for hire, is his major competitor.

We think also of Brays Detectives, who have grown from a small firm tailing unfaithful husbands to become the British specialists in protester surveillance; and Richard Turner Ltd, transformed from cleaners and painters of tall buildings to the market leaders in dishing out violence in doomed treetops. The security sector has of course received a big boost from our struggles, not to mention fencing contractors, manufacturers of fluorescent jackets, and so on. We

have created opportunities for a whole new sector of capitalism.

This is market forces in full effect; just as specialist drainage contractors might be hired to deal with problematical ground conditions, so the anti-anti-roads gang can be hired to thwart those pesky protesters. Contractors are judged by their ability to deal with protests; Tarmac's pious public declaration that the Newbury Bypass was too environmentally damaging for them (with no chance of securing the contract anyway) was a PR coup. They were assisted by FoE's foolish public praise for this cynical greenwash, exposed a few months later by Tarmac accepting a Newbury aggregates subcontract! Tarmac, complete with new green logo, have also established an "Environment Advisory Panel" to fight the PR war for them. Market forces again: our struggles are a challenge for corporations to adapt to, or risk losing business to more sophisticated competitors. As protester-bashing consultant Amanda Webster says: "The advent of the protest movement will actually provide market advantages to those contractors who can handle it effectively." We are a market risk. Thus, DBFO contractors now routinely take "protester risk" into





account when submitting their bids. One way to avoid being "taken into account" is to spread, diversify and increase the risk. Companies have found themselves (and their suppliers and subcontractors) increasingly targeted in their offices and distant sites, at AGMs and at directors' homes, not just on the construction site. Anti-roads battles are also anti-corporate battles; this will become more evident as privately-funded road-building continues. The forthcoming important campaign against the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) must also aim to do damage to Kvaerner/Trafalgar House.

Civil engineers are coping with the lack of British road jobs by diversifying into rail projects, and, more significantly, by seeking more roads business in "underdeveloped" overseas markets, like Eastern Europe, South-East Asia, and South and Central America. This puts our successes in curbing the British roads programme into perspective. In the face of an increasingly globalised corporate hegemony, the importance of linking global struggles, and of sharing information between activist groups world-wide, also increases.

Our enemies can't just accommodate our threat by adapting their business practice, so must attack our movement more directly. The GAndALF trial (see page 129) is very significant here; it is (amongst other things) an attempt to forge a link between "extreme" animal liberationists and "extreme" EF!ers. The animal lib movement has long been demonised, largely via the media, in the public eye, and we may soon get more of the same treatment, backed up by legal sanctions. Smear stories about anti-road campaigns have already been around for years.

A classic divide-and-rule tactic to marginalise a radical movement is to incorporate it as much as possible into the mainstream, whilst isolating and discrediting those who refuse to be incorporated. The Guardian thinks that "The challenge facing John Prescott...is how to bring such [direct action] protesters back into the political system." Bollocks to that; the challenge facing us is to resist all attempts to artificially divide our movement into "reasonable" and "extreme", and show solidarity for those collared for conspiracy charges or other serious offences.

We want to be a real threat to the malignant cancer of corporate capitalism, rather than a media freak-show or irritating market risk. To do this on even a local level, we must innovate and expand at least as much in the next five years as we have in the last five. Broadening our support base, maximising our subversive edge, linking struggles, taking the fight to the

enemy, working in (not with—in) local communities—these, surely, are key factors in making us strong enough to be that threat.

It's been an eventful and exciting few years. Much has changed since the first protests at Twyford Down, and we have achieved a lot. As the EF! and anti-road movements develop and diversify, and our opponents gear up their determination to defend their oily industrial interests, we can expect the next few years to be no less eventful.

Shortly after the announcement that the Newbury Bypass would be postponed for a year, an exasperated local pro-roader was heard to wonder "what the hell will it take to shut these people up?" We're not going to "shut up", but must continue to build on our successes, keeping our anger, and our hunger for real change, sharp. We need to show that we won't be satisfied with deep cuts in the road budget, better public transport and more cycle lanes, or whatever. We must demand the earth.

References

1. Construction News, 15/5/97
2. The Observer Life, 27/2/94
3. The Daily Telegraph, 28/7/97
4. Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions News Release, No. 176/Transport, 28/7/97
5. Construction News, 28/5/97
6. The Guardian, Editorial, 21/5/97

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-doves broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

- from 'The Way Through the Woods'
by Rudyard Kipling.



Lights, Camera... Activism!

Video Media and Direct Action

This article has been written in an attempt to stimulate much needed discussion in direct action circles about alternative media and its role in our struggles. With the space available the article cannot look at all areas of 'alternative media', nor tackle the areas it does look at in any great detail. It will, however, hopefully act as a catalyst for discussions that should, for once, include the activists on the other side of the lens...

If you live and work in a city you are, on average, filmed by over 400 CCTV cameras per day. If you also manage to squeeze in an early morning national action you could potentially add another dozen cameras to that figure—but that's OK because it's our own media—isn't it?

"I was surprised that not only were people quite happy to send me footage of actions without asking for any control over its use, but some of them had sent tapes to TV stations and couldn't remember getting them back again afterwards." Researcher, Channel 4, November 1997.

There is a basic philosophy underpinning direct action which goes a lot deeper than the net result of the day's action. As the RTS poster states: "Direct action is founded on the idea that people can develop the ability for self rule only through practice, and proposes that all persons directly decide the important issues facing them. It is not a last resort when other methods have failed, but the preferred way of doing things". The issues that have to be tackled are how the ideas and theories behind direct action transfer to the alternative media; whether there are certain ethical criteria that have to be fulfilled for the alternative media to interact successfully with other areas of direct action, rather than become part of the mainstream with a profit motivated agenda.

Although there are many areas of campaign support that need to be looked at in detail, this article focuses primarily on video cameras because, in the wrong hands and with the current state of understanding, they can prove incredibly dangerous. Misuse of video cameras can adversely affect the action itself, as well as increasing the risk of arrest for the activists involved.

One case occurred at the launch of a new car in London. The camera operator, working on the Undercurrents video news magazine, had been allowed to record the planning process as well as the action itself. On the day all went as planned, with the car at the centre of the action finishing up covered with paint,



and the activists quickly leaving the scene before the police arrived. Incredibly, the person with the camera decided to remain to film the police response—and was subsequently arrested. The tape inside the camera not only contained all the footage of the action but also the build up to it, and faces and voices of those involved. Although no-one was prosecuted as a result of the seizure of the footage it gave the police unnecessary intelligence that could be used in the future.

On another occasion people were arrested after a demonstration at Hackney Town Hall; unedited 'activist' footage from the action was given straight to the local TV station—who then handed it to the police. During the action the 'activist' was questioned and claimed to be filming for Undercurrents. This was later



'The Video Activist Handbook'

by Thomas Harding (Pluto Press 1997)

248 pages £12.50 ISBN 0-7453-11695

Written by an Undercurrents director who could find books on 'how to make a wedding video, but none on how to become a video activist', this book is aimed at everyone from the novice to the experienced campaigner.

The handbook attempts to cover all topics from equipment and editing to sales and strategy, beginning most chapters with a general overview, before presenting, with some bias, the arguments for and against each tactic. But whilst it manages to cover most topics, however briefly, what it does not do is attempt to cover the underlying ethic behind direct action: the tactics behind wrapping up a deal with your local TV company over the phone gets five pages against two covering the entire history of visual propaganda and information dissemination pre-camcorder. But despite the lack of theory, the book can still be a very useful tool for those new to the field of video activism, with case studies highlighting both the potential success of video activism and the potential pitfalls. There could even be a few lessons for Undercurrents in there somewhere.

Undercurrents—The Film

Undercurrents has been going for just over 4 years now and are currently producing issue 9. With a run of 500 copies, dozens of film showings across the country, and world-wide distribution, Undercurrents is one of the most widely encountered 'direct action focused' productions. Despite their hierarchical operating structure, each issue has increased in radical content and is overcoming the liberalism of early issues. Number 7 carried a piece on the use of sabotage by activists (concentrating on the Newbury burnings) that many other publications, (especially after the GA raids) would shy away from. Issue 8 include a film on the bloody repression of the Kurds by Turkey, a piece on the victorious anti-supermarket camp at Wymondham (see page 54) as well as the regular roundup of global news. The main criticism of Undercurrents the film—rather than Undercurrents the organisation—is its ridiculous price. With actual production costs per video being around £2.00 there is no excuse for charging £12.95 a copy (£9.99 concessions)—if you're on the dole that's a quarter of your weekly income. Undercurrents is worth watching and organising film shows for—if only their internal structure was as good as their finished product.

found out to be untrue—but despite the person with the camera being a stranger to everyone on the action, one word acted as a passport to record every intimacy and potentially incriminating act during the action itself.

There are always two sides to every debate however, and many of those currently taking direct action are there after watching Undercurrents at a festival, whilst others may have read through a copy of *Squall* or *Do or Die* and been motivated by the dramatic photographs that complement the articles. But even that raises questions about the potential of the movement to recreate itself in the image of its media representation.... All of which leads to the same point: there has to be a continuous appraisal of the methods and motivations of those involved (at all levels) in alternative media—and at the moment that is not happening. The following aims to highlight points in the process from action to 'advert' and examine the image, theory and motivation.

More often than not, the first part of the process is the recording of the image. People will often try and avoid getting their faces near a police Evidence Gatherer (E.G.) film unit; likewise most will avoid trashing machinery with police filming nearby, yet many appear happy to trust those on site with cameras—as long as they're wearing green and black. Quite a few will remember the open cast action in Derbyshire, when every machine on site was trashed and over £350 000 damage was caused (SchNEWS, 7th November 1997); police attendance was negligible and no arrests took place on site. People may also remember the video cameras filming the smashing of machinery from afar, whilst others stood at the side taking photographs.

What action was taken to ensure that none of the footage taken was incriminating—or distributed without the control of those recorded? The answer, as usual, appeared to be very little. If you see someone turning up on their first action with a camera—or even if you see someone you know and trust filming anything potentially incriminating—you have a responsibility to others on the action to question exactly where their motivations lie, and to take appropriate (intelligent) action. Actually taking part in direct action should come before the recording of the event for others. It should not be seen as a spectacle, but as the way to achieve results—people taking back control of their lives.

At present, the activist community seems to have lost control of the image that is often the only connection those not involved have with what is going on and why. The camera can be there as an integral part of the action, a key weapon to be used as part of the greater



campaign, but the camera operator should never be—or be seen as—an outside unit. They are there to complement the action, and to support those on the front line; this means working with the various campaigns before hitting the 'record' button, and finding the balance necessary for the relationship to work. Trust can only be built up over a long period of time. If those with the cameras haven't got the patience to get to know at least some of those taking part in the action they want to record, they certainly haven't got the patience or knowledge necessary to be given control over the resultant images.

The current alternative media network on which this article is based developed primarily from inside the environmental direct action movement, and this should have ensured that the whole process—from the recording of the initial image through to final distribution—remained within the control of those actively involved in the movement. It should also have ensured our media could develop as an independent and ethically sound means of information dissemination—but the image, from inception to distribution, has fallen from being part of the process to its current position apparently very distant from the ethic it claims to represent.

According to Michael Albert (Z Magazine, Oct. 1997): "What makes alternative media alternative can't be its product in the simplest sense. ...[It] can't just mean that the institution's editorial focus is in this or that topical area; being alternative must have to do with how the institution is organised and works". At present there is one agency that specialises in the production and distribution of alternative video in the UK: Undercurrents. Based initially in London, and now in Oxford, there are a number of lessons that can be learnt from recent revelations about the working ethics of the organisation (see box).

We should note the ease with which control over footage from actions can be taken away from the activist community and placed in the hands of those who may have very little or no experience of direct action. Undercurrents have stated that there has always been a hierarchical regime in place within the organisation, and expect the video activist to accept that fact as a fait accompli.

However, whilst it may be easier to work with such an organisation on their terms, the activist community must both challenge those ideas with which it disagrees, and as necessary find or create alternative outlets for the work. As already stated, direct action does not end when the camera goes back in the bag, and the same ethic has to follow the images from beginning to end. There should be a fluid process in place that

Focus on Undercurrents

A document was circulated last year which detailed some concerns about 'Undercurrents'. Written by several activists with experience of working within the organisation, the main points raised were:

- That Undercurrents' contracts ask contributors to waive all moral rights to their work, whilst claiming incorrectly that work could not be used by the mainstream without the waiver.
- That the contracts asked contributors to sign exclusive rights over to Undercurrents for between 20 to 25 years.
- That the contract demands contributors agree to promote the video in any way possible in order to widen distribution.
- That the majority of money from the sale of footage (70 per cent after all costs have been taken) remains within Undercurrents instead of being offered back to the campaign that produced the images in the first place.
- That Undercurrents have been quietly working as a (fairly) exclusive news agency; acting as mainstream when dealing with outside media, yet still claiming to be activists when working in the activist field.
- That the explicit hierarchy at work within the organisation disallows much sense of ownership to anyone who comes to work there.
- That Undercurrents can only profit in this way because its actual methods of operation radically contradicts what we feel is most activists perception of the organisation.
- That unless there is a large scale change within the organisation activists should begin to view it very much as they do mainstream media organisations.





allows both common sense to prevail and for overall control to remain within the represented community.

Whilst Undercurrents may state they are not deliberately taking control of the image for their own ends, they are demonstrating enough of a lack of understanding to trigger warning bells in all those who come into contact with them. Their explanation, that because the mainstream media want moral rights over all works they use, the activist community must also sign away their moral rights to an outside force, is incredible in its simplicity. If Undercurrents were fulfilling their perceived role as intermediaries between the 'naive' activist and the mainstream media, they should be informing activists of their rights, not working to the agenda of the mainstream. To create an environment where those with expert knowledge in a particular area can develop a symbiotic relationship with the activist community at large, the 'experts' must also practice the underlying ethics apparent within the images they record.

There are numerous publications that attempt in different ways to fulfil the 'alternative' criteria. Examples include SchNEWS, published each week in Brighton, and the Earth First! Action Update. Both work in different ways, and have put in place criteria that attempt to ensure the media (and thus the image) remains within the control of activists and is not taken over by an unrepresentative elite. In the case of SchNEWS, all articles are written, edited and published by activists; this should ensure that not only do those involved in a campaign get an opportunity to represent themselves, but that training is freely available for all those who want to become more involved in the process. In the case of the Action Update, the creation of an elite is avoided by rotating publication of the newsletter each year.


Where we go from here needs debate that must take place at all levels. The action and current standpoint of Undercurrents should be seen as unacceptable. We need to challenge, change, and learn from our current position to ensure that we never find ourselves in the situation where control of the image has passed to those who place their own survival above the greater good of the movement. The next time someone asks you where you're from, and tells you to put the camera away, it's not necessarily part of an ego-war, it could be because they have never seen you before, and want to know where your motivations lie. Do you know?

[Do or Die is obviously not immune to the problems outlined in this article. Opinions and suggestions are welcome.]

Grassroots Video Contacts

- i-Contact, [New networking centre for those interested in videoactivism. Looks promising.] 76 Mina Road, St Werburghs, Bristol BS2 9TW, UK. Telephone/Fax: 0117 914 0188. E-mail: lostit@gifford.co.uk
- Organic Chaos Productions (Rampenplan), P.O. Box 780, 6130 AT Sittard, The Netherlands. Tel: +46-452 4803. Fax: +46- 4516460 E-mail: ramp@antenna.nl
- Direct Action Media Network (DAMN), 444 Melrose St. Morgantown, WV 26505, USA. E-mail: direct@tao.ca
- HHH Video Magazine, PO Box 888, 10 Martello Street, London, E8 3PE, UK.
- Left of Center, c/o Chris Lugo, 1928 A 18th Ave So, Nashville, TN 37212, USA. Tel: 615-460-4669. E-mail: christopher.lugo@nashville.com

Since the original document (referred to in 'Focus on Undercurrents' box) was circulated, we have heard that there may have been some changes at Undercurrents—but it remains to be seen whether these amount to anything substantial. (We certainly hope so!) People at Undercurrents have been requesting a right to reply in this issue, as they saw this article before publication. After much debate we decided we are not happy with this. Firstly, space was a consideration—inclusion of a reply would mean sacrificing other articles that people had spent months working on. More importantly, why do Undercurrents deserve a reply any more than anyone else criticised in a piece printed in Do or Die? We felt that they could write a letter of under 500 words for the next issue or submit a longer piece as an article, and it will be read and considered for publication as all other submissions are. Undercurrents have had plenty of opportunities to respond to these criticisms in a meaningful way (indeed the author of this article waited for a response from them before concluding it), but have so far consistently failed to do so. Instead they have chosen to misrepresent it as an attack on all video-activism, motivated by a personal grudge. It is nothing of the sort—as you can tell, it seeks to strengthen video activism (and all DIY media) by applying the ethics of direct action to the media which represent it.



In Tusks We Trust!

Wild Boars are Doing it for Themselves

"As the rabbit has been the problem [sic] of the 20th century, the boar could be that of the 21st century" - Derek Harman, Ex-gamekeeper, Kent.¹

It gives us great pleasure to announce that a touch of wildness has returned to the South East, one of England's tamest regions, and Do or Die's 'manor'.

Up to 300 wild boar are thriving and breeding across a huge swathe of Kent and East Sussex's relatively well-wooded countryside, following regular breakouts from boar farms since the Great Storm of 1987. And it's not just confined to our region—according to Gail Edwards of the Wild Boar Association, "there are animals all over Britain starting to form colonies [which have been reported as far north as Humberside and Scotland?]. The full impact won't be seen for five to ten years."³

One should not underestimate the power of these beasts: unpredictable wildness has always gone hand in hand with danger. They are "aggressive, immensely strong and can inflict terrible wounds with their lower tusks, which are kept razor-sharp by being honed against the top tusks, and can reach eight inches or so in length."⁴ While a single specimen can be threatening enough, in at least one wood boars have been observed in groups of twenty five or more! Furthermore, these populations are thought to consist mainly of feral hybrids, unconstrained by the boar's traditional wariness towards humans.

For millennia before their final eradication in the 17th century boars carried out a vital role in Britain's forests, enhancing regeneration by rooting and turning over the soil—a task they still perform in French forestry to this day. Roy Dennis of the Highland Foundation for Wildlife⁵ believes that they could help to restore the Caledonian forest (see "No Evolution Without Revolution", Do or Die no.6), and there is no reason why they could not facilitate wide-scale re-forestation in the South East too. They render another valuable ecological service as well, being extremely effective at decommissioning cars. A single Kent garage had to repair three cars suffering from 'boar damage' in the space of a week, and another vehicle involved in a separate incident was considered a complete write-off.

The situation can only snowball. Apparently, just like any normal human being, these boars "recognise no

fence boundaries", and they are "believed to be 'recruiting' other domesticated sows from outdoor pig herds to join them in the wild."⁶

Sadly, but entirely predictably, vets and farmers are already calling for a cull to contain the boar population. They may carry Swine Fever (as with badgers and the unproven link with Bovine TB) and thus may threaten domestic stocks. MAFF is reported to be 'very interested'—Watch this space!

We would also like to announce a new sub-species—the yuppie boar. One German farmer claims to have lost nearly £20,000 worth of grapes to a filthy strong herd. "They have stripped bare half a hectare of vines, he says, although not without discrimination. It was the two sweetest varieties of grape they chose to devour—Sorten Optima and Muller-Thurgau. They left the Riesling untouched."⁷

References

- 1) "The Boar is Back!", Kent Courier, 31/1/97.
- 2) Ironically, a recent scientific feasibility study concluded that "it seems unlikely ... that a successful reintroduction of wild boar [to Scotland] will occur in the foreseeable future." (Tree News, Autumn 1997.)
- 3) "On the Trail of the Wild Boar", Downs Country Nov./Dec. 1997.
- 4) op cit. 1).
- 5) "Return of Key Species could revive Forests ...", Aberdeen Press and Journal, 26/9/97.
- 6) "Vets call for Boar Hunt to halt Deadly Disease", Daily Telegraph, 16/6/97.
- 7) "Plague of pigs strips Germany bare", New Scientist 5/10/96.



No Escape from Patriarchy

Male Dominance on Site



"Hey, cool idea, Jane. Maybe one of the men here would like to dream it up."

Living on a protest camp is a unique experience, it is completely divorced from the reality of British society—preconceived ideas and perceptions are altered drastically. Perhaps it is because of the continuous pressure—the reason you are there is to try and save land from being annihilated by companies, government departments and people who have no respect for the world in which we live, who are prepared to decimate land in favour of profit. Due to this, living on a protest camp is not an easy life, it involves a great deal of work and strength of character. A bonding grows between people that I personally have never experienced elsewhere. I can liken it to that of family relationships—what you go through with each other in such a short period of time is enriching, you are continuously evolving, learning new things about life that no education system could teach you in a hundred years. The overall concept of a camp is one of a free society; you can speak to any 'road protester' and they will tell of ideals that focus on anarchy, equality, freedom, free love and

basically anything else you want to chuck in as long as it shows respect for freedom in the individual.

Yet despite this, as a woman living on site and speaking to other females involved in various campaigns—everyone agreed that it was without a doubt, a patriarchy dominated environment.

I am trying not to rant and moan, but it has got to be said that protest camps can be one of the most chauvinistic, domineering and belittling experiences for a woman to be in. Maybe it's the extremely unbalanced ratio of men to women on site that makes the leering, fire lit eyes of the cider induced hippie a very bothersome experience. For starters, there seems to be this assumption that women can't climb, can't put up walk ways and that their treehouses need the stern eye of the more experienced male cast upon them before anyone would dream of having a smoke in them.

In the kitchen bender, protest camps seem to be regressing back to an almost medieval level whereby women quietly get things done on a regular basis, and



males seem incompetent of even lifting a sponge. There are numerous occasions in which a female will without fuss do the washing up as a matter of course in getting the camp to run smoothly, or get the slop pot bubbling, and not even whisper that she is pissed off with doing it for the tenth night on a run. Yet if one male does it one night you can guarantee the ritualistic argument that will follow during the course of the evening where each testosterone filled being will slam their cards down on the table, and tell every member of the camp and any lurking SAS in more than graphic detail exactly what they had done that day, how they did it, and what techniques they used to tie that particularly complex walkway knot. In most situations it is the description of the knot that gets everyone going, because someone else always knows better and that someone else that knows better, you can bet your harness on it, will invariably be *male*. A friend of mine said something which summed the situation up very nicely: "The ways some blokes carry on, you'd think it was a fucking achievement managing to have a shit in the shit pit"—and that was said by a man!

I recall once sitting up an ash tree that I had lived in for the last two months when a reasonably experienced male climber visited the site and was pottering about in the walkways, passing by my tree. He took one look at my abline and quickened his pace. "Oh dear" he said, "how long have you been abseiling on that"—just that brief sentence was enough to make my eyes roll into the back of my head, and take a deep breath before proceeding with my somewhat short answer. Before I knew it he was involved with untangling the line of the various branches, tutting to himself about the unsafety of my present line, and about how everyone did it this way these days. Fair enough, at this stage I was grateful for his advice. That would not have been so bad if not an hour later some other "dashing knight in shining harness" was to come ambling past only to re-tie the abline using the previous knot. I threw my hands up in disbelief and left them to it, but admittedly felt somewhat stupid because I had not listened to myself. I should have been able to say that the line was fine as it was, that I had done it myself and I knew it was okay—but my confidence was challenged by these men, and I believed at first that they genuinely knew better.

What males do not realise is that there could actually be two ways, maybe even three, of tying that knot, and each method will still be as effective as the last, still as safe, and there is no need for the temperament of those sitting around the firepit to rise to such vocal levels. Why is it that it only seems to be the women that realise this basic fundamental fact and will calmly find

the way that suits them the best, and if questioned about it will end up being confused and amused by this ranting male, hell bent on proving his masculinity to you by persuading you that you want to do the knot his way? But I tell you, you don't, you're seething underneath, you're pissed off with this continuous rant and this fervent belief upheld by males on site that women really don't know how to do anything.

Back to the washing up. I am sure you will agree that days and time pretty much fall into one on site, yet the *male* will always remember what day, what time and how long it took him to do that particularly distasteful batch of washing up. Not only that, but the reason he did it was because "no one else was doing any fucking work, I've been working all day, there is no food in the kitchen and there's no fucking clean dishes." I do not need to really accentuate the point any more, but whilst males get hysterical and clock up the number of times they have spent doing something as mundane as washing up, females just do it and a hell of a lot else as well. Yet they do not demand continuous thanks, gratification and worshipping as their male counterparts. In discussing this particular issue, which infuriates me on a daily basis, a friend of mine, also female, said "It's always blokes that lunch out whole days, girls always work, even girls that just come down for a day do work." Perhaps it's because men don't have wombs and there is that bit more space in their stom-

CAN'T I TAKE A JOKE?



AS A MATTER OF FACT, I JUST
RAN OUT OF MY SENSE OF HUMOUR!!



achs which allows them to consume abundant amounts of tea that makes some of them downright lazy.

You have to laugh really but there is more, and its even worse—going pixieing with a bunch of males because they take it so damn seriously, they seem to think that they become these stealthy creatures of the night interacting with the psyche of nearby security, predicting with dazzling (in)accuracy the securities' movements, moving with the earth in sure quick movements that would daze even the infra red cameras of undercover police.

The funny thing is—the male spends all his time getting to his destination, prepared to trash that generator only to find some one else has got there before him. He then stomps back to camp in annoyance whilst the female has taken down three fields of fencing, but she won't tell the male because she knows that next time he'll want to go with her, and to be honest they are a bloody hindrance with all that macho commando earth stuff. Not only that, but put a slightly drunk blokey bloke near a security guard, whilst you are trying to unload large amounts of sugar into the generator he is guarding, and all manner of hollering, shouting, swearing and general abuse will follow—for I might add, no particular reason whatsoever. It just makes life slightly uncomfortable when you are dangling off a bit of rope trying to prussak up to your tree house, being pelted by stones because some lout has been tormenting security all night. Okay, so it is not a nightly occurrence, but once or twice I have found myself apologising to the security (something no one likes doing) for men's behaviour towards them. Us females found that singing "what did you do in the eco-war daddy" in a particularly out of tune voice and grating fashion far more effective.

If I was going to get hardcore feminist about it then I wouldn't have survived on site for as long as I have, or I would be living in some equally repressive matriarchal site. Obviously sexism doesn't exist all the time, but there is certainly the undercurrent on sites that men are in control. Maybe it is due to the intense situation of living on a site—where there is often a continual presence of security and police—that causes people to be far more aggressive about building and work, and the threat of eviction at any given time that can cause the general attitude of some males to be very oppressive. For example, there seems to be this general unwritten rule that you do not talk to another man's girlfriend; alright, so you might end up pissed up in bed with them later, but in front of everyone it as if men are holding you at arm's length.

From my own personal experience, when I arrived on one camp I was with my boyfriend of the time. I found that the other people living on site tended initially to talk to him far more than me, almost as if I was a second class citizen. Questions about where we had come down from were directed at him, he was the one being offered the spliff and beers first, and what was even worse was that one particular individual actually directed questions about me at him. I am 20 and well trained in the art of responding to questions about what my name is and how old I am, yet I found myself having to be assertive all the time and behave in a confident manner, directing questions at people in order to get a response from them. Eventually my bossiness worked its way through and males would begin to voluntarily talk to me, but there was a certain amount of scathing analysis beforehand.

Then it comes to sex; as I said before the ratio of men to women is disproportionate, for each woman there are several men, and as new arrivals appear on site single females are very quickly weighed up and a mental battle begins as suitors line up for their attention. For example, a friend's sister came down to site at Manchester Airport's Wild Garlic Camp. (During the previous week there had been two women on site, and most males were at this stage exhibiting signs of sexual starvation. I was out of bounds as I was seeing someone and none of the blokes wanted to tread on my blokes toes, and the other girl was in the process of fighting off two blokes—in her own words, "deliberately building barriers in front of me in order to put them off"). Now this girl was very pretty, yet as she came gingerly across the dodgy bridge that crossed the river, this almighty 'Wooah' emerged from the fire pit area—eyes widened, mouths salivated and tongues hung, as the main contenders for 'Sexist Pig of the Week' went into action.

She was eventually claimed by one of the *males* that lived on site (and I do not use that word lightly) after much arguing, bargaining and clamouring for attention. It was sickening to watch, yet on site there is certainly this general free love ideal which, as one male that I discussed the issue with said "is manipulated by some men living on site". That is of course a matter of opinion, but he asserted that there was a certain amount of pressure to conform to the free love ideal, and "not everyone wants such relationships, if they don't their space should be respected. Some men I know can be really pressurising and really hassle a girl when she blatantly doesn't want to... it does tend to be men more than women that are up for it".



Of course this comment is not intended to point the finger at anyone, or say that women do not enjoy the concept of 'free love' to the fullest, but there is a vast difference between free love, sharing your body with someone for the night, and a drunken quicky, when you only realise half way through the monotonous thrusting that you haven't got a clue who you are with, and start trying to work out how on earth you managed to get yourself in that situation, and how the fuck to get out of it.

One thing that came up as an issue in a discussion about patriarchy on sites was the 'clothing problem'. One woman told the following story: "I used to have this pair of purple trousers, which I wore all the time because they were really comfortable. One day a good male friend of mine said to me 'you look really sexy in those trousers', and I sort of laughed it off as you do, but then he said "have you not noticed all the blokes looking at you". I didn't like the thought of that so I stopped wearing them, I didn't want people to see my sex. I wanted them to see me. I began deliberately to dress in a less feminine manner, bland and laddish to avoid hassle."

I personally had a similar experience when one sunny day feeling buoyant I wore a skirt, numerous males commented on it, one even asked me "what the fuck I thought I was wearing." There is this definite fashion to dress in masculine clothes—which I generally do anyway through choice, but in both situations neither of us should have been made to feel that our clothes were in any way sexual, or that we should not have been wearing them for whatever reason.

The same woman told another story of living on site which emphasises some of what I have been trying to say: "I had been away from site for two days, and I was walking down the slope to the fire pit when someone shouted hello out of their treehouse, I shouted hello back, there must have been about six men on site, one person shouted "women at last" and they all jeered. It felt like a building site—the energy in that little bit of valley was completely male. It was not that I didn't like it there, I loved it, there was space for me there, but it made me uncomfortable. After a month or so I began

to really notice that when I was with girls, there was something inside me that I could release, something that made me relax. With blokes I was always a little guarded."

Despite all this disgruntlement, the patriarchy that exists is not a conscious thing. Once on an action I had a go at someone who was being blatantly sexist, he apologised immediately and looked distressed that he had said anything that could be considered sexist. For all men's faults women are still very much respected on site and patriarchy does have its 'advantages'. For example, when situations are getting really tense between men, women seem to have a strangely calming effect. If you talk to them in a calm voice, they often listen, you can tell them not to be violent and they frequently are not. Men on site tend to become very protective over you, not in a possessive way but you know they will always look out for you.



The answer to male egos? Throughout the 1980's India's Bandit Queen, Phoolan Devi, led thousands in a war against patriarchy & the caste system.

The fact that this happens proves there are gender differences, that sites are patriarchal, but then so is society, and it is society I blame for it. Many of us have been brought up recognising men as dominant in some way, sexism remains predominant in much of western culture, the fact that site living is supposedly some form of free anarchic society is true only to the extent that we say it is. The reality is that our cultural knowledge is inadvertently embodied within us, and in order to release ourselves from a male dominated environment then we need a long and concentrated project that is not hampered by the continuous threat of eviction, arrest and soaring stress levels. Despite this, there is no reason for complacency; being aware, and not assuming that women are incompetent is a major step forward.

The patriarchy on road protest camps is not a conscious one, often it is not deliberate, and it is a by-product of western culture. However it can make for a repressive environment—"there is something about sites that brings out the caveman in some men."



No-one Ever is to Blame

In 1990, an unprecedented number of mainstream scientists confirmed to the world that global warming was a reality. The IPCC (the UN's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change) recommended the minimum reduction—60%—in CO₂ emissions that would be needed just to stabilise the gas at its present level. If we divide the remaining 40% by the probable number of people on Earth, we get an indication of how much CO₂ each one of us can emit per year. It is measured in units called Daubs, and is (due to uncertainty in mathematical models) somewhere between 5 and 10 daubs per person. The current US average emission per person is about 97 Daubs, and for the UK it is around 47. Most people on earth already emit less than 10.

The concept of a personal equitable quota of fossil CO₂ fascinated me. Here, I thought, for the first time, was a credible and definitive indication of where the true threshold of sustainability lay. What more convenient and representative overall single indicator of environmental impact could there be than fossil fuel use? Since we all already knew our environmental impact had to be reduced, the only thing left to tell anyone seemed to be, “by how much?” Between them, the IPCC and the Global Commons Institute (who first proposed the personal quota) had provided an answer. I decided this was something I should tell people about.

About two years ago, I produced the first photocopied version of a single A4 sheet explaining the CO₂ quota. Although not particularly glossy, it provided enough information for anyone who could press calculator buttons to work out their CO₂ emissions from the main

direct sources—use of utilities, transport etc—and compare these against the apparent sustainable threshold. First, I gave them to my friends in what might be called the “climate change campaigning community”. The first batch of photocopies went a surprisingly long way, and I was pleased to see that a project I regarded as uniquely important was costing so little to implement. Months after starting to distribute the sheets, I still had not run out of copies. Somehow, they always seemed to find their way back to me, if indeed they ever left in the first place. If I gave one to any visitor to my flat, I often found it laid somewhere after they had gone. Elsewhere, when I was the guest, I kept on finding I somehow still had the paper myself after I had left. Sheets were generally either handed back immediately without comment, or else declined on such grounds as the type being difficult to read without glasses, or part of a tree having been used to make the paper. I realised that most people were extremely reluctant to accept my sheets, sometimes even to touch them. More disturbingly, the vital figures on the paper, figures on which the future of the world might depend, seemed to have a natural aversion to human vision. I felt as if I was attempting to hand out crucifixes to vampires. I tried posting the sheets to people, but they reappeared promptly with replies parsimoniously written on the back. I found something to photocopy onto the back, and cynically waited for the messages to move to the margin.

After a while, I started asking people directly what they thought about the idea of voluntary restraint based on the quota. Their replies were vehement. No one liked the idea, it seemed. I persevered, though, and gradually amassed quite a body of objections, most falling roughly into one of the categories below:

- **Alleged Threshold Miscalculation:** Some people asserted (without supporting evidence) that the sustainable CO₂ threshold does not lie within the range where Working Group One placed it. The true threshold was usually said to be zero.





A very few people argued that quotas should not be allocated on a global per capita basis. Their objections can be separated as follows:

- **Per Capita Allocation Is Unfair To The First World:** First world people consume and hence emit more. To meet the quota, their individual cuts would therefore have to be greater, in both percentage and absolute terms, than those of third world people.
- **Per Capita Allocation Is Unfair To The Third World:** Third world people are greater in number than first world people, so the combined effect of them all doing something adds up to a greater total than the combined effect of all first world people doing something. It would therefore be against the interests of third world people to merely reduce their emissions to the equitable level when, by virtue of their number, they have the ability to do more and thus benefit the climate and hence themselves to a greater degree. (I can't help wondering whether I've misunderstood this one.)

However, objections of this nature were rare. Instead, the vast majority of responses apparently accepted both the threshold calculation and the concept of per capita allocation, but disputed the advisability of individuals unilaterally trying to keep to sustainable levels.

These objections separate as follows:

- **The Quota Is Too Complex:** It is necessary to use arithmetic (of about primary school level, I would guess) to calculate emissions.
- **The Quota Is Not Complex Enough** (ie, too simplistic): The real situation is very complicated, and CO2 emissions must not be considered separately from all other environmental issues.
- **The Quota Is Too Exact** (or mechanistic): What really matters is the spirit in which CO2 is emitted, rather than the actual quantity released.
- **The Quota Is Not Exact Enough:** Errors and omissions are inevitable in calculating the quota, and the results should thus be disregarded entirely.
- **The Quota Is Too Forceful** (or dogmatic): People should be allowed to decide on their own responses to global warming, without having ready-made conclusions suggested to them.
- **The Quota Is Not Forceful Enough:** Since there is no means of compulsion available at present, it is inappropriate to propagate or respond to information detailing what emissions reduction any individual should make.

There were specific objections to emitting at the sustainable level while others continue to emit higher.

These comprise:

- **Keeping To The Quota Would Be Too Altruistic:** Since virtually everyone else (in the developed world) acts unethically, it is inappropriate for any individual to unilaterally restrict him/herself to ethical emission levels.
- **Keeping To The Quota Would Not Be Altruistic Enough:** Since virtually everyone else (in the developed world) acts unethically, it is inappropriate for any individual merely to unilaterally restrict him/herself to ethical emission levels. Instead, the individual should go further, and attempt to compensate for everyone else's over-emissions.



There were also general social/ideological objections. Typically, people described the quota as "Luddite", "hair shirt" or associable with such things as "open toed sandals". On this basis, together with the minor setbacks to my health (punches on the nose, etc) which I was told were likely to befall me, I was advised not to promote the concept.

So what was I to make of these responses? They did seem disappointingly lacking in cerebral sparkle and moral valour, coming from a part of society which prides itself on having outstanding common sense and a freehold on the moral high ground. So far as I could see, none made much sense. None even seemed logically to justify virtually unrestrained emissions by the individuals who had made them, which seemed to be their main true purpose. But then, perhaps that's why they didn't make sense. Those who made the comments were clearly not willing to consider reducing their emissions by any significant degree at all, let alone consider reducing them to a threshold which might represent some degree of safety. They were thus not as grateful as you might have expected for being told what was, after all, the minimum reduction that they could possibly get away with. Instead, they were irritated and flustered, and prone to some very rickety defensive logic. Here and throughout society, such desperate denial may be the main problem. Apparently



lacking is any recognition that, however unprincipled, objectionable, or even downright misguided it might indeed be to stop destroying the world, it is necessary to do it anyway.

Many of the responses listed above came from people who had previously been my heroes. Alan Ereira, who brought the Kogi tribe's televised plea for emissions restraint to us, explained that I had misunderstood the Kogi's wishes. They had never wanted us to restrict our emissions to sustainable levels, it seemed. What they really wanted, it appeared, was for us to get into the right attitude of mind. Alan added a suggestion that more could be achieved by "driving down" consumption by the world's poor than by restraining our own emissions. Personally, I find it difficult to believe that the Kogi would prefer to have their livelihoods destroyed by our carbon belchings, no matter how piously emitted, than to suffer the dreadful knowledge that our restraint to sustainable levels had not been accompanied by the right state of mind. Had I tried, I would have found it even more taxing to imagine the world's poor being forced to cease emitting quantities of gas which they do not emit in the first place.

Richard Douthwaite, author of "The Growth Illusion", had a more colourful, but still not entirely original, objection. While accepting that the reduction in personal emissions would have to come eventually, he objected to any such restraint occurring immediately on a unilateral basis. We should wait, he said, and then, one day, we should all reduce our emissions together.

I found myself wondering who would give the signal to do so, how we would all know it was the right person giving it, and how the person in question would decide when to tell us to make the change. As soon as possible would be a good idea, obviously. Could I give it now, for instance? If so, then this is it!

During the time I had been passing round the sheets, I had also been trying hard to keep my own emissions

below the threshold suggested by the quota. However, I now found myself in a strange position. The environmentalists around me were trying to talk me out of it. They wanted me to resume destroying the world as quickly as they were. I began to feel less comfortable in their company, and largely retired from the campaigning scene to think things over. Had the quota revealed more than I intended?

From a distance, many of my former comrades' actions now began to look odd, and even rather questionable. A brand new tropical hardwood door had recently been purchased by someone who had previously been one of my closest allies in the fight against tropical deforestation. It jostled for space in my thoughts, against the cars owned by anti-road campaigners, and the transcontinental air trips continually undertaken by those who said they wanted global warming to stop.

Animal rights activists don't eat steak (so far as I know) so why do environmentalists see nothing wrong in driving cars, flying around the world on holiday, and pouring unsustainable soya milk and cane sugar into their tea? If they want the world saved, then why are they continuing to destroy it?

The environmental movement does, apparently, already have answers to this. A common one seems to go something like this:

Although the consumer is the one who actually does the consuming, he or she is not to blame for doing so. Consumers cannot be much to blame because there are so many of them, and the blame is thus shared only thinly between them. (This seems to be the reverse of the argument which says third world people should reduce their emissions below the equitable threshold because there are so many of them.) Instead, the blame for consumption lies mainly with other links in the supply chain, where there are fewer people to share the guilt. Manufacturers and suppliers are thus largely to blame, and managers particularly so. The government





is also to blame, because it does not prevent consumers from consuming, or suppliers from supplying.

Of course, a few consumers do not just shut up and consume. Even while they consume, they direct a stream of criticism at the government and at their suppliers. These people hope that their words will have more influence in stopping the supply than their actions have effect to the contrary. Instead of simply reducing their own destructive consumption to acceptable levels, consumers attempt to persuade someone else to force them to do so. It seems a rather round-about way of achieving the desired result, but that is not necessarily a criticism. After all, many cultures have what seem like odd and circuitous ways of doing things. The real question is, will it ever work?

I say no, and this is why:

First, in the chain of supply and consumption, the consumer is the only link which cannot be bypassed. If the individual consumer stops consuming, nothing can be done about it, except to try and persuade someone else to increase their consumption to compensate. At present, everyone else is already being persuaded pretty much as hard as possible anyway, so that won't have much effect, even if the message to stop consuming does not also spread. This situation does not, however, apply to other links in the supply chain. Nor does it apply to governments. Get rid of one destructive widget manufacturer, and there are usually a million more manufacturers (or potential manufacturers) waiting in the wings to take his place. In other words, consumption is the limiting factor, not supply. Similarly, if the entire government died of some unfortunate disease overnight but there was no change in the popular ideology, an almost identical government would be installed immediately after the election.

Second, politicians, advertisers and businessmen are not stupid. They know what I was too naive to realise until the revelations of the quota made it inescapable. They understand the depth of hypocrisy lying behind all the environmentalist's accusations. They know that virtually no one, not even the environmentalists themselves, is actually willing to live sustainably. No one really wants the world saved, not if it will significantly restrict their gluttony. All anyone really wants is someone else to blame. So the producers and politi-

cians serve us doubly. While fine-tuning the machinery of destruction for us to fuel and drive, they receive the wrath which we aim at them. Perhaps we have actually come to believe in our own condemnation of our suppliers. Perhaps these career scapegoats even encourage us, by adjusting their rhetoric so as to continue to attract our anger.

After all, they wouldn't want us to face reality, would they? Whatever the case, having established our supply of excuses, we continue to buy whatever we like for ourselves, rewarding the politicians with votes for a job well done, and blessing businessmen with an uninhibited market. Even the environmental pressure groups now find a comfortable nest in this collective rotteness. They soon learned that subs and fame came



only from telling the sort of truth that people wanted to hear. We were thus instructed to direct our hatred at governments and multinationals. With our lifestyles quantitatively exceeding sustainable levels many times over, the most that mainstream environmental groups thought we should have to cope with was the suggestion that we put our bottles in a different shaped bin, or pump up our car tyres properly. Pleased with their words, we gave them some money. Pleased with our money, they gave us newsletters full of invective about big business, and coloured stickers to stick on our unsustainable cars.

It is logical enough, I suppose, that our environmentally corrupt society should have an even more corrupt environmental movement to protect it. Perhaps everyone else has known this for years, but it is new to me, and something of a shock.

[The editors of Do or Die use and fully endorse the excuses described in this article. If you'd like a copy of the quota sheet, with full instructions (batteries not included), send a self addressed envelope and two 1st class stamps to Do or Die. Brighton Sorting Office is taking on extra staff to cope with the anticipated demand.]



Pressmennan's Wand

Defending the Ancient Oakwoods

Landowners. The Federation of Landowners. The National Farmers' Union (NFU). The old boys' network. Freemasons. MI5. The Forestry Commission (F.C.). The timber industry. These are the main predatory forces responsible for the destruction of what's left of our natural habitat—ancient woods.

The Forestry Commission was set up during the First World War to ensure that sufficient hardwood was accessed from within Britain, since import ships were frequently sunk. Nowadays they serve landowners, who are viewed as the "client base" to whom the FC funnels masses of taxpayers' money under several guises, but generally to encourage the maximum 'release' of timber onto the market.

Our conservation body/corpse is the Scottish Natural Heritage. Yet another useless—if not harmful—government quango, which provides a facade of protection while in reality it eases the way for industry past environmental "restrictions". It is completely powerless, and unable to do more than help facilitate compromises which enable landowners to liquidate their 'business assets' with an added touch of greenwash.

Magnus Magnusson (obviously the greatest brain in Britain) helps prop up the establishment by acting as a figure-head for the SNH. The Pressmennan campaigners have been privileged to receive Magnus pacifiers in the form of letters applauding our efforts but detailing the landowners' "legitimate financial requirements". Landowners are allowed to make money out of every part of their land no matter what's on it. We challenged Magnus recently with a small community action, protesting his hypocrisy in unveiling a statue of John Muir.

Government papers repeatedly reassure landowners that environmental legislation will only be applied according to the "Voluntary Principle". For a habitat or a species to be legally protected is meaningless in the face of

business interests and our present social power structure: rich at the top, wildlife at the very bottom. It's not anti-humanist to support the underdog—it's instinctive common sense. As our local police pointed out when requested to intervene in defence of Pressmennan's large and rare bat populations, (Daubenton, Pipistrelle and Longeared), any injury to bats or damage to their habitat is merely a "by-product" of a business "operation", and therefore negligible. Even in European courts—the last legal line of defence—"socio-economic factors" can override conservation laws.

The head of Britain's Forestry Commission, politician and businessman David Bills, often refers to the new "Forest Standard" in his regular propaganda letters to the press. According to an unexpectedly honest and





therefore rare Forestry Commissioner [who must remain nameless], this is nothing but a political tool, comprising a watered down and even less binding version of the existing completely unrestricting guidelines. The Standard is going through its consultation process with who else but the N.F.U. and the Federation of Landowners, just in case it does anything other than maintain a steadily increasing flow of financial perks, (cunningly bypassing recognised social and natural requirements), to these earth destroyers and exploiters.

Ancient woods are the last surviving fragments of our native ecosystem and habitat. These average in size at a measly 6 hectares, 60% of which exist on privately owned land. Britain as a whole maintains less than 1% of its original wildwood, East Lothian, the home of Pressmennan, less than 0.1%. [All figures are from the Inventory of Ancient, Semi-Natural and Long-Established Woodlands, and do not include ancient woodland sites that have been replanted with conifers.] The FC actively encourage their exploitation with grants such as the recently drafted scheme to "bring previously unmanaged woods under a course of management." This includes as much felling as they can get away with and 'replanting' with plastic tubes. Landowners receive about £600 per hectare per year to maintain these tubes (usually containing the fast-growing sycamore), occasionally carrying out chemical weeding to keep at bay that terrifying beast nature, and to eradicate the last surviving plants of the murdered forest which lie dormant in the soil.

There is arguable justification for sensitive, sustainable management which includes some felling in commercial man-made plantations—but this is neither applied, appropriate or necessary for the conservation of ancient woods. The favoured catchphrase used by the FC to shut up the masses is "felling for regeneration". As if nature couldn't manage before we came along! Particularly the Masonic god-fearing/god-aspiring landowners seem to genuinely believe that nature is inferior, imperfect, and exists for man's use, sport and improvement.

Felling for regeneration is the modern term for deforestation [similar to "salvage logging" in the US]. As a member of Broadleaf Resistance in Wales retorted, "I wouldn't like to be in a tribe where you kill off the elders to make way for the next generation!" Elitist pseudo-scientific jargon distances the FC from the ignorant and overly emotional public. Woods are accused of having "native flaws", of needing management in the form of mass felling to protect them from "freak weather", and of being dangerously near to roads. One expert claimed that since many of

David Bills: It's the only language he 'understands'.

David Bills took over as Director-General of the Forestry Commission in December 1995. Prior to that he had served as President of Australia's National Association of Forest Industries, and as general manager of North Forest Products since 1986. North are scum—"number one among Australia's destroyers of old-growth forests", and the world's biggest exporter of wood chips, liquidating thousands of hectares (2.5 million tons) of Tasmanian temperate rainforest every year. Bills himself is "absolutely detested" by those who seek to end this slaughter, not just as one of its main architects but because he is also seen as legitimising the widespread violence perpetrated by loggers against protesters, which has included shootings and fire-bombings.

In 1993 he argued that "If violence does emerge, before passing judgement we should take time to understand the perspective of somebody being driven to financial ruin... as opposed to recruited demonstrators on a Tasmanian holiday." He still stood by these words in 1995, insisting that protesters "go out of their way to provoke a violent response from loggers", and describing their "so-called passive resistance" as "a very cynical exercise". And this bloke is now in charge of the UK's largest landowner, the Forestry Commission! (Sources: Guardian 4/10/95; Independent on Sunday 3/12/95; "Green Backlash", Andrew Rowell).

Pressmennan's trees were 'twisted', the "correct arboricultural solution" would be to clearfell the entire 6000 year old wood and replant the site with genetically improved stock, (in straight lines and plastic tubes of course). They also stated in an interdict (Scottish for injunction) that Earth First! was "violently opposed to anything practical or useful" - interesting...

Only once the FC's top expert George Peterken stated the obvious candidly in his report did the "felling as treatment" bullshit related to this particular case recede. For the record, the relevant quotes are that "the canopy would gradually open naturally and self regeneration would occur", and second, that "While there are financial benefits, the thinning is of no silvicultural benefit...will exasperate windthrow...[and] is a high risk management option." The conservation strategy written by the campaign group, with the help of genuinely intelligent and sensitive people (including highly qualified foresters), was skillfully excluded from meetings, reports and consultations. It did, however,



fulfil all of Peterken's advice and criteria, it just didn't entail the felling of any ancient trees. All of the local community associations supported our plan.

Often there is an argument for human intervention as being useful, to compensate for previous negative influences—eg. the control and gentle restriction of acidic spruces and non-natives which decrease and damage natural diversity. In some cases, scarification and the protection of seedling counter excessive grazing from unpredated deer, or sheep.

The reintroduction of wild boars [see p.9] would help woodlands infinitely more than any human intervention. These walking woodland regenerators aren't king of the forest for nothing. They scarify, dig and protect as their role in the previously balanced ecosystem. Appreciate and contribute and set us free, say the wild boar. They survive very well even in a modern agriculture-dominated landscape, as Pumba, a local bacon-buttie escapee recently proved. We forget how intelligent and wily these creatures are. (Note wily/wild and creatures/create). Pumba, who escaped when poachers were attempting to steal him, lived happily, healthily and harmlessly, and lonely, around East Lothian for months. The too romantic and beautiful living legend came to a sudden end with a bullet in the head from a police marksman. He was grazing peacefully in a field with some horses he had befriended.

Wild boar bacon is apparently becoming trendy. Boars are being brought to the edge of wilderness separated only by a fence. A bit of liberation—changing boars' destinies from a bolt in the head to a bolt for freedom—would do a lot for conservation, boars and the human spirit.

The main problem with reintroducing wild animals is the lack of potential habitats. Ancient forests are of course the mother of all habitats, yet the most aggressively threatened. The rarer the timber, the higher the price, the harder the sawmills try to get their greasy, sleazy little metal hands on it.

Two years ago when our campaign began, timber company A & J Scott from Wooperton, Northumberland sent scouts to locate remaining oakwoods in East Lothian. Several farmers were approached and offered around £30,000 for access to their woods. They were advised to hire "management consultants" to organise grants and front the operations. Thus, A & J Scott's monopoly was concealed.

A & J Scott dominate the timber scene on the east coast. They are the only company big enough to afford the most advanced machinery and force small sawmills into dependence, having to buy through them. Most surviving wildwood fragments exist on steep inaccessible slopes, making it hard to extract. However, the technology now exists to enable cost-effective mass extraction, releasing hardwood as Gross Product onto the global market. The timber of several sessile oakwoods was to be shipped in bulk to Germany, where the ancient woods are protected. (Oh yeah, FC quote: "We view all woods as crops.") Since most of these forests are hidden in valleys, their disappearance goes largely unnoticed until it's too late. Oswald Dene, another ancient woodland, was completely clearcut by A & J Scott. It was on the edge of a main road, and so was noticed by shocked commuters, forcing the FC to be seen to be doing something about it. After media exposure the FC agreed to prosecute. "A small fine", we thought cynically. Worse! They got off on a technicality, claiming no one actually saw them carrying out the illegal felling. Someone (with a bulldozer) may have snuck in and felled the trees under cover of darkness! The case was thrown out and the FC seriously scolded for not gathering any evidence. Tidy!

Our ancient woods are so badly neglected that they were quickly labelled as a priority habitat after the Rio Summit. A document entitled "Upland Oakwoods: A Costed Habitat Action Plan" (CHAP) was urgently drafted—Britain signed it. CHAP outlines targets for protection, expansion and management on a minimum intervention basis. This implies no unnecessary felling. So CHAP is ignored, twisted, transformed and unenforced. Seemingly this document has no effect unless officially adopted by local councils. (Something to encourage). Then and only then can landowners be legally restricted from felling. Only one council in Scotland has done so, curiously the one which is presently attempting to evict Faslane peace camp.





The FC claims to account for CHAP by using the word 'minimal' (instead of minimum) in their guidelines. Felling plans are described as minimal if any trees are left standing. CHAP also states that if necessary, legislation must be changed/introduced to ensure its enforcement. Landowners must be made to expand and protect ancient forests as part of a much needed natural zone. The natural zone would be left as wild as possible. A sustainable zone of non-ancient woods can allow for interaction, reconnection, learning, crafts, and harmonious mutual benefit between humanity and nature. An intensive zone of existing offensive plantations (not ones being restored) can satisfy existing needs while society evolves and eventually grows out of dependency on mass productivity and monocultures.

Since every piece of land and the nature that grows on it is unique, the wildlife evolving and adapting for 13,000 years, it is essential that all remaining fragments of ancient wildwood are recognised as vital cores for biodiversity. Oak trees support more life than any others. Natural life and the sadly disconnected—therefore hungry—spiritual life of humans have a right to exist and be nurtured. The deforestation of the land and Highland Clearances to favour sheep, twinned with the oppression of our language—Gaelic—were the harshest deathblows dealt by pirates and thieves. Gaelic speakers have no word for, and therefore no concept of, ownership. The alphabet is based upon native plants and their annual sequence of budding. Children were beaten at school when caught talking in their own language.

The druids (oakseers) were no fools when they argued that oakwoods (the sacred groves) were the only real teachers. They still are. Teachers of harmony, diversity, transformation, living. They provide practical working metaphors for almost everything. Fundamental emotions and clarity of thought can be experienced in such woodlands, where life energy is strong and we are as one with the rest of ourselves. Unrestricted by human constructions—geometry, artificial noise and dysfunction—we are centred in our natural habitat. Ninety nine per cent of the life in this country has been destroyed. The land is relentlessly battered, poisoned and abused. Us too, we are painfully disconnected from our roots, and the roots of nature in this country are these tiny, fragile, beautiful forests. Folk have to reconnect, even if it takes art or bird-watching to get them there.

While these wildwood fragments still survive, there is a chance to redress the balance by allowing to return what has been stolen and murdered. The life force exists, it just needs to be liberated. (Loads of farmland

"The Germanic tribes were renowned for their holy groves and Tacitus, the Roman writer, refers to them in his "Germania". In the 8th century a tree known as Jupiter's Oak was cut down in religious zeal by a Christian missionary, St. Boniface, at Geismar in Germany, but paganism continued long after. The old German laws exacted a terrible punishment for those who committed the crime of peeling the bark of a tree. The offender's punishment was to have his navel cut out and nailed to the damaged part of the tree, after which he was made to walk round and round the tree until his intestines had wrapped themselves around the trunk. Thus living tissue replaced the wound the perpetrator had inflicted, a life for a life." From: "In Search of Herne the Hunter", Eric L. Fitch, Capall Bann 1994.

has to be set aside anyway.) I'm loath to say that a start could entail the introduction of grants to encourage expansion, and the abolition of those grants which encourage exploitation. Meanwhile, there's plenty that the individual can do. Get a copy of your local Inventory of "Ancient, Semi-Natural and Long-Established Woodlands" from English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage or whatever. See how many of the registered ancient woods are left and check them out. Identify any that are under threat by checking Woodland Grant Applications (WGAs). [Although please remember that these are not the only source of danger—it is worth keeping an eye on development planning applications as well, for example.] These can be found by accessing the FC Internet site or by visiting your local council's planning office. It may help to arm yourself (with the Freedom of Information Act leaflet). If large areas of broadleaves are listed for felling in valuable sites, demand a copy of the full WGA from your local FC office. Make sure they don't tippex out vital parts of information (as is their habit). Don't believe their propaganda, and prepare to publicly tear it to pieces. Order surveys, offer alternatives, hold the FC to their guidelines, then ask the wood what it wants you to do next. If it is privately owned, it will be well nigh impossible to get anything but background support from established conservation bodies, given the political nature of the campaign. They won't risk losing funding or jobs by challenging the establishment. Be wary of those who offer 'professional experience'—they are liable to seriously land you in it at a later date.

Pressure from ramblers' groups has led to the introduction of grants to encourage public access in private woods. I have noticed that nearly all the recent WGAs



include funds for creating and maintaining paths. Of course, the public is told nothing and is completely unaware that their taxes are legally gaining them access to local beauty spots. Many of these paths are probably mythical but should be checked out, publicised and used. The FC is a brick wall, so we just have to use and abuse them. Playing stupid or taking no shit are good methods of gaining information. Write everything down and keep dated records.

Our campaign started with great local support, weekly local press coverage, petitions, then adoption by the council. Eventually a Tree Preservation Order was placed on the whole wood—we thought we had won. The private sector don't like to be told what to do by the riffraff. The ultimate aim was for the permanent protection of Pressmennan with a precedential Compulsory Purchase Order. CPOs are usually used to build roads, so this would have been a wonderful use of the system. Hopefully somewhere else will manage to pull it off. The opposition closed ranks and took to using the law as a weapon. Thousands were spent on lawyers, letters and threats. Intimidation was flying around aimed at whoever they could hit. Eventually the council was nobbled when a key character (their representative) suddenly and mysteriously backed down at a crucial meeting. This left them liable to huge financial compensation to the farmer for inconvenience and loss of income.

Sexism, male ego, hidden motives and serious shit stirring eventually caused the original campaign group to disperse. However, individuals continued to campaign and a legal case was compiled, the basis of which was laws which protect rare species (bats) and habitats (oak-woods). Unfortunately, the Trust which is meant to be fronting the case are in fact neutralising and restraining its use because they are overly bureaucratic, land owner arse-licking, uninspired, unimaginative, ignorant, apathetic wankers who kicked out the only trustee unwilling to compromise the forest (ie. allow trees to be felled)—the originator of the legal trust! Their bigotry can be illustrated in a quote from a member who shall remain nameless: "Single women shouldn't be in trusts". Compromising kills campaigns. Don't back down!

The camps were great ideas, one for woodland awareness, the other reclaiming common land. Both ended in disaster after increasing torment. Consequently neither site is available for use when we really need them. It was difficult to deal with dodgy characters who distracted and diverted the campaign. They refused to work within the organic, 'democratic', sharing, attentive, sensitive, positive energy which was flooding from the wood (Pressmennan is also on a ley-

line). Excessive confrontation, bullying and aggressiveness trashed the campaign and nearly reduced the mainstayers to a wreck. Much public support was lost during that period unnecessarily. Group agreement and careful consideration of tactics is vital, as is cooperation. If we have to have another camp, let it work with and for the wood.

Post-camps, and after much deliberation, it was decided by some that perhaps the least damaging and most certain method of defence was to devalue the timber. Ceramics are undetectable and break expensive sawmill blades. Apparently, a number of trees were carefully spiked, clear warnings were also marked throughout the wood. The opposition claims to be unperturbed, but the trees are still standing.

No matter what happens, we've raised masses of awareness, had an education, saved at least hundreds of trees and empowered the local community to the extent that they are becoming more active—finally. Meanwhile WAND's going to keep doing everything possible to protect Pressmennan—may it expand through the valley and contribute to reafforesting the world.

Contact: W.A.N.D (Woodland Awareness and Network of Defence) 01368 850630

Update: Victory at Pressmennan!

As of late January, Pressmennan's so-called 'Management Committee' appears to have acknowledged defeat, announcing that "an indefinite hold has been put on the felling of the oaks"! A half-hearted attempt to trash the wood earlier in January served as a dry run to test the strength of local people's opposition—and the response then was more than enough to frighten A & J Scott off. They now argue that the police were unwilling to protect the chainsaw crew from the big bad eco-activists, leaving them no alternative but to withdraw. A more likely explanation might be the thoroughly deserved humiliation they've suffered at the hands of the Pressmennan campaigners. They were terrified by the prospect of even more unwanted publicity—over the ultimate destination of the timber, for their bull-shit 'management' proposals, for the tree spiking, and for a host of other damaging revelations uncovered in the course of the campaign and so far kept secret. Yet more bruising legal battles were also in the works.

A watchful eye is still being kept on the wood, but at this stage things are looking good. As one WAND activist says, "We never gave up, even after two and a half years. Direct action has saved the wood." Positive vision wins out!



No Opencast!

History - Action - Analysis - Contradictions



No Opencast is a campaign run by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and supported by Women Against Pit Closures and members of the Miners Support Groups. Since early 1995 there has been an informal co-operation between the No Opencast campaign and Earth First!ers. This has culminated, so far, in the action in Derbyshire on Friday 31st October 1997. On this action an opencast site, owned by HJ Banks mining company, was visited early in the morning by around 250 activists. Within two hours the mine was put out of operation, with estimates of the damage caused ranging from £375,000 to £4 million. This article attempts to give some background information to this campaign and action but also raises some questions and possible contradictions about its history and aims.

Opencast mining (or strip mining as it is also known) is one of the most ecologically destructive mining method in use today. To gain access to the raw material wanted it involves the excavation, removal and irreparable destruction of huge quantities of the surface eco-system and the earth below it. Local people have to endure noise, vibration and severe dust pollution. Villages are torn apart by heavy trucks and evidence is growing to show the link between the pollution caused by opencast mining and the incidence of respiratory diseases in children. When the mine is exhausted and the operators have made off with their profits, the problems for the people that live near the site persist.

Although the process is the same for whatever is being mined, this article is specifically referring to the issues surrounding opencasting mining for coal here in the UK.

Recent history

Opencast mining has undergone a massive expansion in recent years, yet this has nothing to do with any particular energy policy pushed by the government. It has far more to do with a political vendetta by the State to smash the militant resistance to exploitation shown by mining communities over the years.

In 1972 and 1974 the miners went on strike to protest against the government's policy of drastic cuts in



Heselmine PLC!

On 14th May 1995 12 members of the London Miners' Support group walked onto the 800 acre estate owned by Michael Heseltine. He was the then deputy leader of the Conservative Party and the person responsible for destroying the deep mining industry and their communities in the 1980's whilst allowing opencast mining to flourish. A small area of his front garden was marked off with tape and a sign erected by activists announcing that this was the 'Heseltine Opencast Mining plc.'



This initial occupation was to be the first stage of a plan to present a planning application to Northamptonshire County Council to establish an opencast mine on Heseltine's land. Before long a larger group of campaigners visited the same area and started to remove turf and establish the mine. An apoplectic Heseltine appeared in lavender pyjamas wittering; "What was the point of the Criminal Justice Bill if you can't remove these people from my land?" People re-arranged the dug-up turf so that it read 'No Opencast' and then left.

The largest occupation was on 20th October 1996 when 90 ex-miners, their wives, Earth Firsters and others visited him again. They put up a 6 foot high screen and within it's confines a large hole was dug. No coal was found, but no doubt much annoyance was caused to Heseltine—again—and plenty of journalists captured the scene, including the planting of a tree before everyone left.

in defeat for the miners and a further round of pit closures ensued.

By 1992 the coal industry in this country was down to a fraction of its former size and only the most modern and productive pits had survived. Michael Heseltine, the then President of the Board of Trade, announced the closure of a further 31 pits. The pretext for this was that there was no longer a market for British coal—yet the real reason was to pave the way for the casualisation of labour and the privatisation of the coal industry by destroying any last vestiges of resistance from the miners. Hand in hand with this closing of the deep shaft mines came the expansion of the opencast coal mining industry with its smaller casual workforce

public sector workers' pay. In 1972 the State was unprepared; coal stocks were low and this caused an energy crisis resulting in extensive power cuts. In 1974 the then Prime Minister decided to call a snap general election under the slogan: 'Who rules the country—the miners or the government?' He lost and was bundled out of power.

Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, nursing a desire for revenge against the miners. She bided her time and by 1984 was ready. Coal stocks were high and she set out to provoke the miners' unions into strike action in the spring when energy demand was lower. A programme of deep shaft mine closures was announced. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) predicted that if it went ahead more would follow and the industry would be decimated. They went on strike—not just to protect their jobs, but also their communities and their way of life. What transpired was a year long strike, one of the hardest fought and bitterest in this country's history.¹ It eventually ended

that is easier to exploit without organised resistance.

It is these very towns and villages that bore the brunt of the 1984/5 strike which, having had their communities and future weakened—and in some cases destroyed, are now under attack from destructive opencast sites.

Opposition to opencast grows

Opencast mining, as mentioned earlier, is notorious for its air, noise and water pollution and increasingly is being linked with respiratory problems. The main focus, so far, for local opposition groups fighting opencast mining have been these health issues and most planning applications have been fought on this aspect of opencast alone.

Since 1995, however, EF!ers have been addressing the wider ecological effects of opencasting. One of the first groups to do this—Leeds EF!—took action in early 1995 targeting an opencast site in Yorkshire, and at about the same time Welsh activists were setting up



camps at Selar and Brynhenllys sites near Swansea.² These actions, amongst others, led to an increasing alliance between EF!ers and the No Opencast campaign—which raises some questions I will attempt to address later.

Scotland, too, increasingly was being ripped up for opencasting, as many at last year's EF! Gathering near Glasgow witnessed first hand. However, due to the fact that all the villages affected were small, and the rural population distribution was fragmented, the opposition mounted was fairly ineffective.

The No Opencast campaign was getting increasingly frustrated by the loaded planning process and the blatant attempts to destroy mining communities and decided to take more radical action. This led to a series of joint actions with Earth First!ers—the first of which was the initial visit to Heseltine's garden. (See box—'Heseltine PLC!') After this the No Opencast campaign and EF!ers started to work closely together.

As well as this the widespread opposition against opencasting across most of the country led to, amongst other things, Friends of the Earth (FoE) organising a conference of anti-opencast campaigners in early 1996. It was attended by local opposition groups and led to the creation of an English and Welsh network, administered by FoE³ and now comprising over 120 anti-opencast groups. (There is a separate Scottish network managed by the Scottish Opencast Action Group (SOAG)).

Smash the (E)state!

On 5th January 1997 a group of around a hundred anti-opencast campaigners descended on Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, the ancestral home of the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke owns huge swathes of Derbyshire and allows developers to opencast large areas of it—although not near Chatsworth of course!

A sound system played loud recordings of noise from an opencast site so that the people who are routinely subjected to it could give him a feeling of what it was like. Three people got inside his house and waved flags from the windows whilst others held banners outside. The Duke's right hand man mingled with the activists handing out press statements and saying that the Duke would be out in a minute. His peace offering of warm soup was turned over on the ground and after much venom flying in his direction he eventually retreated behind his wrought iron gates for protection.



Notes

1. To give some indication of this look at the arrest statistics for this strike. They included: 4089 for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace, 1682 for obstruction of the police, 640 for obstruction of the highway, 1015 for criminal damage, 359 for assault on the police, 137 for riot and 509 for unlawful assembly. (All from 'Miners Strike 1984-1985. People versus State.' by David Reed and Olivia Adamson. (Larkin: London 1985.)) The strike also provided the final fine tuning of the police into the paramilitary force that they are today. For more details on this read: 'State of Siege: Politics and Policing in the Coalfields—Miners' Strike 1984' by Jim Coulter, Susan Miller and Martin Walker. (Canary Press: London 1984.)
2. For an account of resistance to opencasting in Wales see 'Autonomy, Resistance and Mediation. The dynamics of Reclaim the Valleys!' on page 74 in DoD No.6.
3. More specifically it is co-ordinated by Tim Sander of Chesterfield FoE. Tim is now being sued by John Wilson of Fitzwise Ltd., a notorious opencast company. Wilson alleges that in November 1995 Tim produced an agenda for a public meeting libelling him as a hypocrite for moving house in anticipation of an opencast mine being opened nearby. Tim denies the libel, refuses to apologise, and is contesting the case. There is no legal aid for libel cases and so Tim is representing himself. This is clearly an attempt to squash resistance to opencasting and to act as a warning to others. Messages of support and donations for legal costs to: Tim Sander c/o Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ, UK. Telephone: 0171 490 1555.



Reports and Thoughts on the Action in Derbyshire

What follows are three accounts of, and some opinions on, the No Opencast action in Derbyshire on Friday 31st October 1997 all written by activists who were there. As well as this there is a short piece on some possible contradictions and problems with the nature of the alliance between radical ecologists and the No Opencast campaign.

"All this lurking about in the dark inspired a lot of giggling."

We met in a squat in London and there were maybe 60 people or so. The idea was that we would hide out there, leave in the middle of the night and arrive at the opencast site in Derbyshire at 5 or 6 in the morning. The time until then was to be well spent in planning our actions.

We were given briefing sheets, explaining what we were going to do. These were counted out and counted back in again and then burnt before we left the building. No one was supposed to go in or out of the building until we all left together. I was posted on guard duty to make sure no one got out. All very Mission: Impossible! Meanwhile, with the aid of some big bits of paper on the floor and marker pens, everyone crowding around was given some idea of the layout of the site and what targets we should head for when we were in.

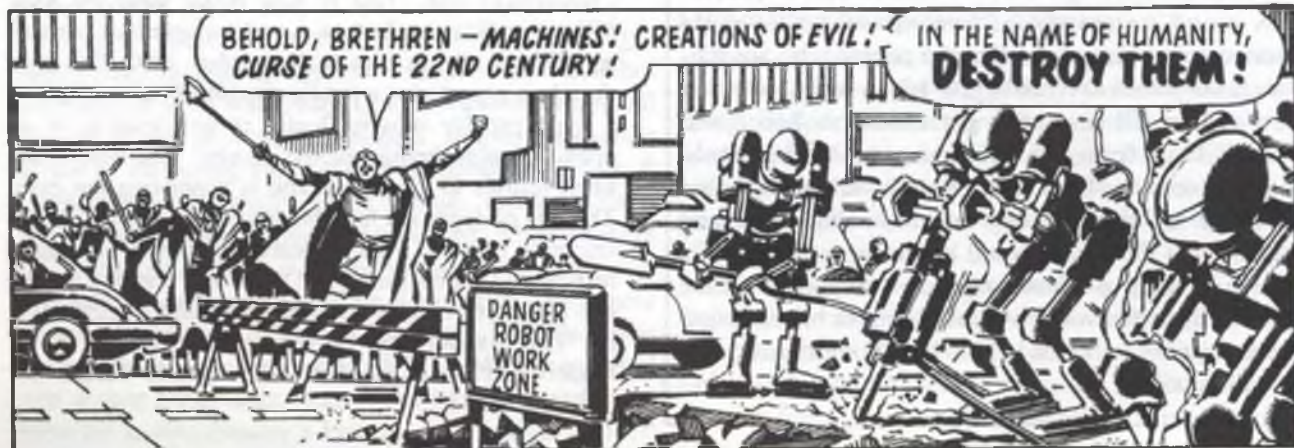
This action appears to have been one of the few occasions when all the rhetoric about how affinity groups are the way forward constantly spouted by EF!ers in this country actually seemed to materialise into something. We split up into affinity groups to go off and decide in private what we were each individually up for—running about, trashing stuff, occupying machinery etc. and what we wanted to head for—machinery, vehicles, offices etc. You have to come equipped if you're going to be sabotaging things and as none of my spectacularly well-prepared group had brought anything or thought about it at all we decided we weren't going to be monkeywrenching.

However, some people in my group did have a clever plan which could be more widely adopted. They were dressed head-to-toe in standard activist colours (green and black is the new green and black dahlings!) with hooded tops and combat boots etc.. Yet underneath this regulation anarcho-garb they were wearing rainbow-coloured hippy jumpers. Thus they could cunningly evade police surveillance and confuse police stereotypes.

We had a big school-trip type coach to take us to the site, so we all piled on—the tough kids grabbing the back seat and the swots sitting up front in time-honoured fashion. As we hit the motorway we were informed that all mobile phones had to be wrapped in the silver foil that was being passed around to prevent them being used to track our progress by the police. The whole planning of the action operated on roughly this level of paranoia. Over the top? Well, maybe...

We were woken up 5 or 10 minutes before arrival with chocolate and whiskey which made us all feel a lot better about being in the middle of nowhere at 6 in the morning. As per usual prior to an action I was all nerves and butterflies in the stomach. I've never been able to account for this, as when the action starts I'm relatively calm and in control. We all piled out of the coach and attempted to keep quiet and hid behind a hedge that ran along the side of the road. It was cold and dark but dawn was just breaking.

Because of the military precision of the timing we had to hide behind the hedge for about 5 minutes until exactly the time set for us to go over the top into the site. People from other towns and areas would be enter-





ing the site from different directions at 1 minute intervals to meet up with our London crew. All this lurking about in the dark inspired a lot of giggling that did not sit well with the highly organised timing and precision. This wasn't helped by the fact that we had to keep our heads down below the hedge every time a car came past—the bobbing up and down only produced more giggling and noisy shushing and more giggling.

We all poured over the flimsy barbed wire fence and up the steep embankment that marked the perimeter of the opencast site. Getting to the top of the slope was rather an anticlimax—there was just a big deserted site on the other side. We stopped running and sort of ambled in a big straggly group—all semblance of military order now gone. We weren't really sure which direction to go so we all just followed the crowd. "Baaaa!" shouted some wit from the rear.

The whole action had this weird character—we encountered no resistance which gave the whole thing rather an odd dynamic. It's like the two sides define each other by opposition—take away our opposition and it all felt rather formless. As often is the case when we are successful we become victims of our own success and don't know what to do with the totally unexpected situation of actually outwitting the cops and not being faced with a set-piece everyone-knows-their-role cops vs. activists confrontation. With no antagonism, no adrenaline rush of confrontation, there is no opposition to give us a focus. There was no such focus here, so we just sort of ambled about. Our affinity group sort of fell apart as one guy said he'd catch us up as he just had to go off and chat to a friend. It was good the way the whole event was a chance to catch up with old friends from the other end of the country; faces remembered from past actions and evictions, but it did mean the planned organisation of people into affinity groups kind of fell apart.

A van with headlights full on was driving around the site and seemed to have seen us but drove off in a dif-

ferent direction. There was an initial impulse to hide from them but we quickly realised this was pretty pointless—if they didn't know we were here yet they soon would do. The few mine workers or security who were on site basically stayed out of our way in their little portacabin things throughout the action.

My affinity group/bunch of useless mates (ho ho only joking) soon spotted a great big digging thing on the edge of a rather large hole which we quickly climbed all over. On the top of the pneumatic arm thing we got a great view of the whole site and also got covered in great globs of disgusting grease. From our vantage point we could see other groups arriving from every side of the site. One bunch marched below us led by a bloke in a silly wizard's hat and a drum. "That's Manchester" someone said. We exchanged a few yips and whistles and clenched-fist salutes with them and saw another bunch arriving a bit further around the perimeter of the site. This lot looked like locals/ex-miners, and they climbed all over some digging things.

We sang revolutionary songs and posed on the top of the digging arm doing clenched-fist salutes for the locals/ex-miners' cameras (which in retrospect was probably not very smart thing to do—even though we were all de rigueur masked-up). From our vantage point we could see various bits of machinery—diggers, huge trucks etc. around the site from which banging, crashing sounds were emanating. Soon I was told we had to vacate our adopted digger because some people had come to trash it.

This kind of set the tone for the whole action—I had gone along with our affinity group decision just to occupy the site and not to trash anything, but now it seemed the only thing to do was trash things. The only things in an opencast mine are trucks, diggers, big bits of machinery etc. It is very unwise to be sitting on a piece of machinery that has been sabotaged when the police arrive. Its kind of like asking for it. So seeing as pretty much every piece of machinery in the place was





damaged in some way within half an hour of arrival I felt pretty redundant.

Almost as soon as we were into the site people were saying: 'there's nothing to do now—everything's been trashed, we might as well leave'. Which was kind of odd and disempowering. The attitude of the 'ego-warrior' that 'if you can't climb a tree then there's no point in you being here and there's nothing you can do except make the tea' has been recognised as an actual and potential problem in our movement. The opencast action did to an extent suffer from the same division of labour—if you weren't prepared enough (or knowledgeable enough) to trash machinery then you could end up feeling pretty superfluous. Was this just another example of the production of a hierarchical division between the full-on activists and the 'ground support'? What's the point of a mass action if it's all over so quickly and there is nothing for the mass of people to do?

I got the impression that people were getting more bold as dawn broke, the sun rose and there were still no police or security. It felt like we were a bunch of kids who had been left completely unsupervised at playtime. I think there is some similarity here with the Newbury Reunion Rampage of January 1997 when equipment was torched that had earlier been sabbed. I think this shows an escalating threshold of confidence in what people think they can get away with. It was a similar thing here—various bits of kit had some initial damage done to them, i.e. slashing or letting down the tires which was then 'improved' on by people going round an hour or so later making sure the job was done more thoroughly. These have been nick-named 'quality control teams'—people were going around asking 'has that been done?', and then checking to make sure it had been done properly.

Most damage was fairly invisible, not like the spectacular fires at the Reunion Rampage. Fire looks really cool, but we had been informed in no uncertain terms

main visible damage I saw was some very obvious smashing of windows. It felt very odd seeing such highly illegal 'nightwork' being carried out in the light of day, as the early morning sun was rising and the mist still clung to the damp grass—bizarre and exhilarating.

After everyone had explored a bit, chatted to friends new or old and most stuff had been disabled in at least some form, people began to congregate at a point where an access road to the mine workings cut between two very steep slopes or semi-cliffs. Perched on top of one of these was one of the mobile lighting rigs used to illuminate the mine workings at night. It was just too inviting. Pretty soon a group of 20 or 30 of us were trying our damndest to push it over the edge. Although our efforts were fairly feeble (it's not as easy as you think, pushing a lighting rig down a hill!) and the end result was something less than the spectacular crash we had hoped for, this was an example of collective action somewhat different to the sabbing of diggers etc. that had been going on earlier. That seemed to rely on a division between those with the specialised skills, tools and confidence to take it on, and those who lacked these things, whereas here anyone could get involved with the already existing mass of people attempting to heave the lighting thing off the cliff. It was the sort of damage that could only be carried out by a mass of people. It was much more inclusive.

However despite this most people didn't join in but stood around as spectators to our efforts (some with cameras!) Maybe they couldn't see us or didn't realise we could do with some help. Even on an action it takes time to break out of everyday passivity and become an active collectivity. e.g: at the Newbury protests in early 1996 there were examples of whole groups of people standing around watching others being arrested and not diving in and attempting to de-arrest them. Even on an action, feelings of powerlessness can overwhelm you or you can fall into regarding the actions of others as a spectacle (even in the case of the most radical!





things myself—quite often at Newbury I felt like a powerless spectator to a drama of security guards and tree-house dwellers carried out before a backdrop of crashing trees. Likewise I have on occasion felt myself as part of a powerful united mass with a common purpose—usually in opposition to a common enemy—almost always the police.

Of course the main feeling on actions is just weirdness, any action that is half-way successful is just not like ordinary life. You can tell a really bad demo because it is just like ordinary life—there is no question of rupture in the seamless banality of the everyday.

Normally if you were merely physically obstructing the site, the strategy would be to stay as long as possible. Here, staying on the site any longer than absolutely necessary would have been foolish—just asking to be carted off (like at the Whatley Quarry national action of December '95). We were faced with a dilemma—stay and fuck things up more since we had the chance and risk getting caught, or scarper while the going was good? The general feeling seemed to be that we should all leave en masse 'now that the job had been done'. We just walked past the two or three cops at the front gate. We had trashed an entire opencast site right under their noses and they were powerless to stop us. It felt good seeing the cops so powerless. We must have looked so smug—no wonder they arrested everyone later in the day at the office occupation.

We had a big circle meeting just outside the gate to the site and decided to split up—some people went to leaflet the local town, some went to the offices of the opencast company and the rest of us went to the local cafe and were shocked to find we had just trashed an entire opencast mine to the tune of hundreds of thousands or possibly even millions of pounds and had finished the job in time for breakfast. Quickest action I've ever been on.

This action shows we can pull off big actions with enough planning and organisation. Since Whatley in December '95, and excluding the semi-spontaneous pyromania of the Reunion Rampage, there has been rather a record of failure with big national EF! actions, for example—the Sea Empress anniversary action at Milford Haven in February '97, the abortive action at Shoreham harbour in May '97. Superior planning and organisation plus the handy expedient of not telling them beforehand where we were going allowed us on this occasion to totally outwit them. The police can't act spontaneously and are very bad at responding if you catch them by surprise; it is here that our advantage lies, and when we do successfully surprise them we can get away with an incredible amount.

We need to make links, build numbers and have more big mass actions that are inclusive of people from outside the activist community. Leafleting the local area and talking to local people was a most valuable and decidedly unsexy job that needed to be done and I am ashamed to an extent that I did not join the leafleting-the-village posse.

One big fried breakfast later and everyone seemed to have split up—lots of people had gone to the pub I think, but we couldn't find which one, so school-trip over, we lazed about in the sun waiting for the coach to take us home. We got talking to a bunch of local kids (quite possibly the kids of local ex-miners) who told us they regularly broke into the site and nicked and damaged things! A fitting end to our childlike playtime of unsupervised sabotage—there was mutual respect between rebellious kids of all ages.

"A smashing good time!"

Around 200 activists arrived by three different routes at the opencast mine at Tibshelf, Derbyshire at approximately 6.15am. The site was completely undefended and the activists were immediately confronted with diggers and six CAT dumpers lined up. At first people sat on the diggers, but it became increasingly obvious that there was no-one to obstruct. Two security guards in a landy approached the diggers, sized up the number of activists and then buggered off again.

What followed was systematic actions of revenge for earth-rape—the like of which I haven't seen for a while. The six super-dumpers, four or five standard CAT diggers, one super-duper digger (I don't know the makes!) and at least four lighting rigs were trashed before the activists had even recced the entire site. Not content with only superficial damage 'quality control' teams were doing the rounds of the site putting the finishing touches to any of the machinery! Near the northern entrance of the site more plant was attacked, and when finally confronted with a police presence (all six/seven of them) a digger had its hydraulics trashed in front of them by a mainly-masked up crowd!

Probably the best lessons of the action were the surprise factor gained by the frankly paranoid 'organisation' of the action (e.g. meeting at one place, revelation of the target site at the last moment and in person) and the fact that at last the majority of people on site were masked-up or at least attempted some form of disguise. The action was euphoric and good-natured (with the possible exception of Mrs. Scargill) with the workers waved at rather than intimidated. Damage estimates have been suggested at around £4m—all in all an incredible start to a week of Earth Nights!



"What were the aims of the action?"

We have a strange history. Largely a series of victorious defeats which may have muddled the water when it comes to assessing levels of success and failure. The No Opencast action on Friday 31st October was very well organised and certainly no failure, but I find it difficult to go along fully with the celebrations of its success. For me the action raised a number of difficult questions about our strategy and direction. And it left me with a gnawing feeling that when the £ signs light up on the criminal damage register our critical attitude goes to the wind.

So, what were the aims of our action? To inflict the maximum financial damage on HJ Banks? To create an interface, an active living point of contact between the No Opencast campaign, the local population, other interested angered people and the workforce? To build the campaign, catalyse further actions and help it gain strength? To generate a feeling of empowerment and collectivity within the movement?

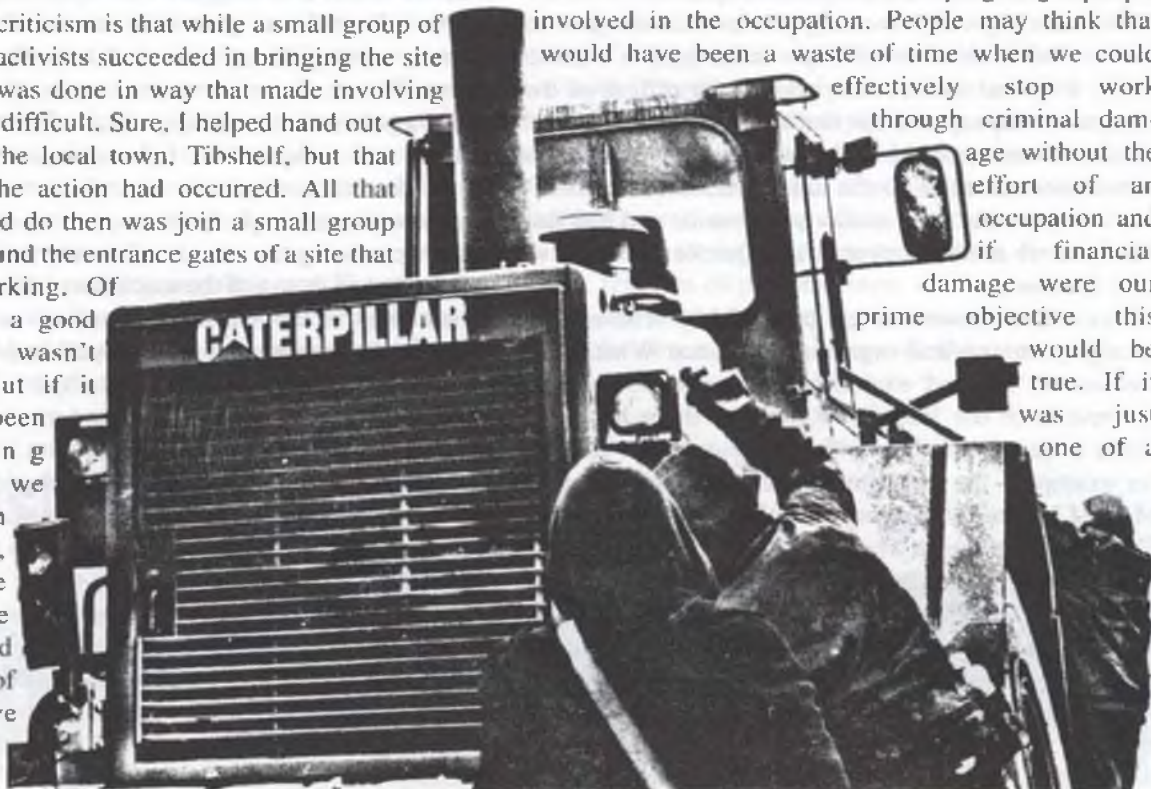
This action mainly achieved the first and fourth objectives. However, I would argue in this instance that on this particular day the first objective was the least important. Let's face it, in anything other than exceptional circumstances a one day action will not bring a company to its knees. But because we privileged this course of action we could never get to grips with any wider objectives.

My main criticism is that while a small group of committed activists succeeded in bringing the site to a halt it was done in way that made involving others very difficult. Sure, I helped hand out leaflets in the local town, Tibshelf, but that was after the action had occurred. All that people could do then was join a small group standing round the entrance gates of a site that wasn't working. Of course, it's a good thing it wasn't working, but if it hadn't been working because we were in occupation, people could have come and been part of an active crowd stop-

ping the work. Presumably the campaign against opencast mines will only grow if it can somehow engage people. Some may argue that mobilising support occurs before the event as part of the networking process, but surely the revolutionary potential of direct action can only be realised when people see it as something that they can get involved with; when it creates circumstances which can catalyse further acts of subversion.

Was the action empowering? People certainly felt empowered, but still, questions remain. Individual feelings of empowerment may or may not be connected to whether we are being successful on a much wider level. A mass action is surely at it's best when through our collective power we achieve things that would have been difficult or impossible for a smaller group to do. Sometimes of course it's just better to have shit loads of people. You only need one person to occupy a crane but with thirty it just feels so much better. In an ongoing campaign where the sites are well secured it may only be possible to damage machinery with a crowd for cover. On the day of the opencast action, as far as I'm aware we didn't do much that five people with a spare night and some aluminium oxide couldn't have done.

In practical terms what I'm suggesting is that some of us should have occupied the machinery for the day while others went round the area trying to get people involved in the occupation. People may think that would have been a waste of time when we could effectively stop work through criminal damage without the effort of an occupation and if financial damage were our prime objective this would be true. If it was just one of a





number of objectives then some kind of occupation makes more sense. As it was, the action took place in a vacuum in which there was little opportunity for it to go beyond itself. Also, (and this is easy to suggest in retrospect) couldn't we have occupied a much larger site, a site where the numbers we had would have actually counted?

Given the absence of mainstream media interest, and the very real problems of dealing with a capitalist media, it seems even more crucial to look at how our activities actually communicate their message. For me the best media is the action itself and the build up to it. Knocking on doors, handing out leaflets, stalls, fly-posting etc. Actions bring these activities to life, but only actions where there is a real presence. Sometimes it feels as if we are becoming some Bakuninist revolutionary cadre who believe change will come through our actions alone.

Although the damage on the day seemed opportunistic rather than planned it may still be worth reflecting on how we situate this activity. Criminal damage is not necessarily a good or bad thing (although it's difficult to see what could be bad about a profound dislike of private property). It's a tactic, and the context in which it is used gives the act it's meaning and value. Like violence or non-violence it can become ideological, i.e.: be given a value outside it's tactical importance, a value in itself. One of the 'problems' with criminal damage is that it feels so damn good. More 'real' perhaps than other methods. For an activist it can become a kind of identity forming ritual in the same way that happens with the martyrdom of non-violence or the revolutionary heroism of violence. This is not to suggest we should be striving for some neutral tactics which we then apply coldly to our strategy. Obviously methods create and incur meanings. It's really just to say that we should be wary of privileging a method over it's context.

One last question—was it necessary for this action to be secret? If it had been open there would have been more opportunity to involve people from the surrounding area, and—in all likelihood—have a bigger overall turnout. Given the nature of an opencast site it would be very difficult for the police to stop a determined crowd from carrying out an occupation. And on the other hand if somehow they managed to stop us, forcing a gigantic police mobilisation on behalf of opencasting might itself be a kind of success. Sometimes, a more open approach may help develop a larger and more political crowd and in consequence force up the political cost of countering our actions.

“Re-open the deep mines? Over my dead body!”

The action in October 1997 at Dole Hill Opencast site sparked off some thought on the collaboration between radical ecologists and the No Opencast campaign and this particular alignment raises interesting questions about the nature of forming alliances with other groups engaged in struggle. There seems to be two areas that are potentially problematic with this particular coalition. These are; firstly the nature of a driving force behind the campaign: the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and then secondly the stated aims of the No Opencast campaign itself.

Although the NUM is radical in appearance, in reality just like all the other unions—a reformist and bureaucratic organisation. This can be seen, not just from a purely theoretical standpoint, but by it's actual behaviour in times of heightened struggle.¹

The 'traditional leftists' view of unions is as workers' self defence organisations there to fight for the needs of the workers themselves. Yet, if we look though history, we see there is far more to unions than this.² What then do they do if not the above? The answer is that they negotiate with the bosses—they negotiate the going rate for the exploitation of the workers and thus act as a 'manager' for the needs of capital. Unions play out a particular role in this society and this is summed up by Lord Balfour when he said; “Trade Union organisation was the only thing between us and anarchy.”³ The accusation has also been made that the NUM and the No Opencast campaign have latched onto the ecological direct action movement in order to advance their inherently reformist and unecological aims of re-opening the deep shaft mines. Is this true—are we being used as 'cannon fodder' for these aims—or are we using them to forward our aims of shutting down all opencast sites without re-opening the deep mines?

Whilst I stand with the miners in supporting their struggle to defend their communities there are limits. This is especially true when the publicity put out by the campaign about actions I am on is something I fundamentally disagree with, i.e: Re-open the deep shaft mines!⁴ There are potential problems with workers run industries—evidenced by the fact that Tower Hill Colliery, a mine that was threatened with closure and then bought, and since run, by the workers themselves has recently entered into a partnership with Celtic Energy—notorious and hated opencast company.⁵

The similarity with the support given to the Liverpool Dockers has been noted by other people, yet I feel that there are two fundamental differences here.



Firstly; not only were the dockers fighting the Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company (MHDC) who sacked them, but they were also battling against their union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) that had deserted and actively worked against them. This is partly why the link-up with the dockers was so important—we were working with the people themselves, not their 'representatives' the union. Yet with the No Opencast campaign we are working alongside the NUM, a union of the same ilk that sold the dockers out so cold heartedly.⁶

Secondly; the docks, in my 'ideal' world, would be closed—they are an integral part of the insane system of mass production and consumption that I oppose. Despite this, whilst they are open, we should support and fight for the demands of the traditional workforce of the dockers to work there; as opposed to casual labour with all its vestiges of organised resistance crushed. Yet, were the docks to close, I would not get involved in a fight to re-open them—which in essence is half of what the No Opencast campaign is asking to happen with the deep mines! What are we, as radical ecologists, doing getting involved in a struggle to re-open major industries? For instance, when nuclear power is finally wound up, and car factories closed down, are we going to get involved in campaigns to re-open them as well?

Having said all of the above, contradictions are not something we should be afraid of and aim to avoid by adopting some puritanical 'green' line—even if that it were actually possible. People change their views and aims; particularly through being involved with direct action, and also when arguments are presented to them in a coherent way. It is, although we seem not to know it, possible to be in a working alliance with people that we share some common ground with and still criticise them on particular aspects of their views. Maybe it is as a result of our relative political naivete that this does not seem to have happened with this campaign. What we do need to decide is on what grounds we form coalitions on, with whom and why. To do this we need to talk, both amongst ourselves and also to others—this is how we will learn and advance our actions.

I have, rather sadly (and yes I admit it—as a bit of a cop-out) no final conclusion to this writing and the questions, if any, it raises about Earth First! and the No Opencast campaign. If truth be told I have attempted to provoke some thought on thorny issues by trying to raise them in the above article—which should in no way be taken as total rejection and criticism of any of the individuals or groups involved in past and present struggles against the further encroachment of the capital and the state. I respect, and acknowledge that we have much to learn from, the miners and similar struggles. What I am suggesting is that we do not lose our critical faculties when it comes to these issues. We must, if we are to change the world to one we want—an ecological one devoid of exploitation, oppression and hierarchy—get involved with other people resisting particular aspects of this system. This will involve working with people that

we do not necessarily totally agree with on every ideal; and even if we do—as some great wit once said; 'If you feel comfortable in your coalition—then it's not broad enough.'



Notes

1. For examples of this during the 1984/5 miners strike see page 4 in 'Outside and Against the Unions'—a pamphlet published by Wildcat. Send a donation to: BM CAT, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. See also 'Occupational Therapy—The Incomplete Story of the University College Hospital Strikes and Occupations of 1992/3/4' published by News from Everywhere, Box 14, 138 Kingsland High Street, London, E8 2NS, UK.
2. See, for example, 'Who killed Ned Ludd?' in 'Elements of Refusal' by John Zerzan (Left Bank: USA 1988)—an account of how the unions were partly responsible for the repression and dispersal of the revolutionary fervour of the Luddite movement in 19th century Britain.
3. Lord Balfour quoted in 'Unfinished Business—the politics of Class War'—page 28.
4. Part of the text from No Opencast campaign sticker distributed at the action on Friday 31st October 1997.
5. See 'The Guardian'—Friday 27th February 1998.
6. Not to mention, amongst others, the Hillingdon Hospital Workers recently expelled from their union Unison.

There is a forthcoming No Opencast action later this year—for more details of this and the ongoing resistance to opencast mining contact: No Opencast Campaign, c/o 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London, W6 7NL, UK. Telephone: 0181 767 3142 or 0181 672 9698. For current anti-mining/quarrying camp details see 'Carry on Camping' on page 54 in this issue of DoD.



Animal Antics

Pissed off Primates and Road-Wreckin' Rabbits

Indonesians have long regarded the orang-utan as exceptionally intelligent—they are thought to be so shrewd that : "the Javanese maintain that these animals can speak but refuse to do so for fear of being made to work."

- "On the Track of Unknown Animals", Bernard Heuvelmans, 1958, p.110.

"September 21st 1993 - A Chinese oil tanker was attacked by a swarm of dragonflies in the Yellow Sea. A frightened crewman jumped overboard. Lookouts had sighted an "obstruction" five miles long by two miles wide skimming quickly towards the tanker."

- *Fortean Times*, no.72.

"Several years ago, in the depths of the suburban wastelands of Columbus, Ohio, ring-billed gulls bombarded a new golf course and its patrons with golf balls. The shocked golfers were forced to withdraw from their favourite water- and land-wasting activity for several weeks, and consider the fact that for many years these lands were nesting grounds for the birds."

- *Fifth Estate*, Fall/Winter 1993.

"Oxbow, New York - The residents of Sylvia Lake blew up a beaver dam this summer, but dynamite proved no match for America's most industrious rodent. Within four days the beavers had rebuilt their dam, stopping up a crucial outlet and raising Sylvia Lake to problem levels once again. On the 4th of July people barbecued on docks under six inches of water. Gale Ferguson... [a local resident] had never seen the water so high in nearly five decades on the lake... "Beavers have no social life," Mr. Ferguson sighed. "They had 24 hours a day to do this. They're near impossible to keep up with."

- *The Guardian* 5/9/96.

"Warrens dug by burrowing bunnies are threatening to undermine railway lines throughout the country, Railtrack says. Embankments and cuttings riddled with rabbit holes are at risk of collapsing in heavy rain... And it is not a problem that is limited to the railways. Supporters of Animal, Swampy and the other 'human moles' who protest against roads by digging tunnels underneath them may be happy to learn that they have been joined by some fellow subterranean subversives. According to the Scottish Office, rabbits are now busy undermining the embankments of the A9, the main road from Edinburgh to Inverness."

- *New Scientist*, 8/3/97.

"Electricity and phone services were knocked out for up to five million people from Canada to Mexico after power lines failed... on the 2nd of July... Hospitals from Seattle to San Diego faced crises and there was mayhem on the roads in 15 states. In San Francisco, the subway system was badly affected. Air conditioning was shut off as temperatures soared above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas. A number of power stations were knocked off line—including four 500 megawatt coal-fired power plants [in Wyoming, Idaho and Colorado]... Because the entire western third of the US is essentially linked by one big power grid, the failure had a powerful ripple effect. It was the biggest black-out since the one in New York in 1977, which left eight million people without power for 36 hours.

On 20th July, investigators announced that the black-out began with a transmission line short-circuiting when electricity jumped to a tree that had grown too close in a remote area about 100 miles east of the Kinport substation in south-eastern Idaho. The initial outage combined with record power demands... led to a gigantic ripple effect. The tree was executed."





[Exactly the same thing happened again on the 10th August, cutting power to four million homes and businesses in nine states, and to parts of Canada and Mexico.]

- AP, 3rd + 22nd July; *NY Times*, 3rd July; *The Guardian*, 4th July 1996; AP, 17th August 1996.

"An army of computer-eating ants from the genus *Monomorium*, immune to many pesticides, are munching their way north from Brazil and could cripple technology across the US. Lured by the warmth of the terminals, which resemble anthills [Shurely Shome Mishtake? - Ed.], they feast on the sweet protective gel that coats circuit boards, exposing them to short circuits and corrosion. The ants also sabotage telephone circuitry, televisions and other products containing computer circuit boards... Cousins of the computer-eaters were found to have eaten through the wiring of the world's largest superconductor while under construction in Texas and short-circuiting the system in the now-abandoned project."

- *The Express*, 20/5/97.

"A flock of hawks closed a runway at Cairo airport for 45 minutes on 1st June, after a small plane killed one of their number during takeoff. They dispersed only after the body of the dead hawk was removed."

- *Reuters*, 2/6/97.

"At the beginning of the year, motorists on one of South Africa's busiest highways were harassed by a troop of baboons who ambushed them with showers of rocks. There had been three attacks on the highway between Cape Town and Johannesburg where it passes through the spectacular Du Toit's Kloof Pass. No injuries or crashes had been reported, but stone-throwing police engaged the animals in a battle on 7th January in a bid to drive them away."

- *Reuters* 9/1/97, in *Fortean Times* no.102, September 1997.

"The Saudi Okaz newspaper reported... that a man driving to work in the Khamis Mesheit region ran over one of a troop of monkeys

roaming the southern desert. When the remaining monkeys spotted his car on the return journey, they jumped on it and smashed the windows with their fists."

"About 60 monkeys attacked joggers and visitors wearing yellow in the Penang Botanical Gardens the day after a youth wearing a yellow shirt had stoned a young monkey to death and taunted others. There are about 350 monkeys in the gardens, about 180 miles northwest of Kuala Lumpur."

- *Ashbury Park Press* 28/3/88 and *Lincoln Journal* 11/5/88, both quoted in *Fortean Times* no.52, Summer 1989.

"The launch of the space shuttle 'Discovery' was delayed from 8 June to 13 July when NASA discovered that two woodpeckers had made 135 holes, up to 4 inches in diameter, in the fuel tank's insulating foam. Technicians had to move the shuttle from the launch pad so that they could patch up all the holes, at a cost of nearly \$100,000. The Kennedy Space Center is in a wildlife refuge. When the delayed countdown commenced, ground controllers serenaded the astronauts with Woody Woodpecker's trademark snicker."

- AP, 3rd June and 11th July 1995.

"Thousands of motorists across Switzerland, Austria and West Germany are now waking up to find their vehicles 'martensised'—with the ignition cables and coolant hoses gnawed so badly [by stone martens] that the car won't start. In the first nine months of 1988, more than 3,000 Swiss drivers filed a quarter of a million pounds worth of insurance claims relating to such damage. In April of the same year, in West Germany, a lone stone marten went on the rampage in a Munich car park and damaged 100 cars in a single night. And according to Audi, 10,000 of its customers are victimised annually."

- *BBC Wildlife*, May 1989.

All items VERY gratefully received—I'll be your Slave for a Day—and by the way, always remember: "All Power to the Tamworths!"





Personality Politics

The Spectacularisation of Fairmile

"Revolt is contained by overexposure. We are given it to contemplate so that we forget to participate." – Raoul Vaneigem.

During and after the eviction of the anti-A30 road camps at Fairmile in early 1997 there was an explosion of media interest that seemed to come out of nowhere and caught us all by surprise. At that time a lot of the A 30 campaign were living together in the office and there appeared to be consensus on what interviews to do and what to say in them.

The overall attitude to the media onslaught was positive but cautious. We would never have gone looking for media interest on that scale and felt that publicity was one of the less important aspects of a campaign. We were wary of exposure that would trivialise the issues, concentrate on lifestyle issues or show us in a bad light. But we were also aware of the opportunity to get the issue of DBFO road financing, which had so far had very little publicity, into the news. We treated it all as just another thing to deal with and we were as thoughtful and tactical as you could hope.

Some very good things came out of it. We did get some media dialogue going on DBFOs and I've met some really sound people at Manchester who got involved because of seeing Fairmile on T.V. I find it hard to get an overview on this myself, but friends tell me that in general media reporting of road protests has been more positive since Fairmile. The media circus brought eviction sites that little bit further into the

mainstream. Although we were almost entirely unsuccessful in promoting general ideas about direct action as a tactic and a philosophy, the Fairmile media contributed to the mainstream trend that setting up a site is increasingly seen as a natural continuation of a public enquiry based campaign.

Road protesting is no longer just a news item; no soap opera is complete without one! This normalisation is partly a reflection of the movement's growth, and partly a result of all those lifestyle articles that negate the environmental issues to concentrate on how you go to the toilet up a tree and what protesters eat for breakfast. The media's concentration on personalities after Fairmile has taken this process even further. Protesters are now seen as a rather cute and harmless subsection of society. Discussion programmes that want to look hip are trying to get the 'protester' viewpoint on issues not

directly related to transport policy or the environment. These discussion programmes display a bizarre duality of thought. There are (only) two sides to every story with the truth lying somewhere roughly in between them. They have a role to play in defining truth by setting out the boundaries of legitimate opinion. By appearing on these programmes the opinion you put forward is legitimised. This obviously holds some potential for subverting the dominant paradigm.

THE MEDIA

Always ready with new & better ways of not seeing what's in front of you.





I was really unhappy with the way that journalists frequently said that the point of the campaign had been to attract publicity to the issues. It not only presented a false view of direct action but was disempowering to the readers as it reinforced the view that they cannot change anything directly. In it's way it was a factor in causing the Swampy phenomenon to continue into the Manchester based No Second Runway Campaign, when some activists adopted this view themselves. Raising the issues is important but it shouldn't be the only point of a campaign, otherwise it's not direct action, it's indirect action. What we had after Fairmile was a situation where the media were reinventing direct action as indirect action.

I should take some personal responsibility for that. When a journalist asked me how I felt that we had 'lost again', I replied that we had won in our own terms because we had cost so much money and because we had 'raised the issues'. It didn't take a lot to twist that into 'we only did it to get in the papers'. This is exactly what the media did, partly because it was what they already believed. I am coming to the conclusion that admitting to journalists that we need them, in any way, is always a mistake. It would however have been impossible to avoid spreading some kind of damaging myth, whatever we had said, when dealing with a media circus that big and that intense. Journalists sometimes ask really difficult questions and are always trying to make you say something that will support whatever angle they have decided to take. The fact that you cannot be sure of what that angle is makes it impossible to know what is the best thing to say. I give my own mistake here as an example of the difficulty of using the mainstream press. It is also an illustration of why media attention on a Fairmile scale, even with its positive aspects, should never be aspired to or relied upon.

At the time we had little concept that 'positive' publicity could be a problem. Looking back on the experience, I think that we need to be at least as wary of 'positive' publicity that misrepresents individuals and/or the campaign as we are of publicity that is negative. I feel a lot more comfortable being denounced accurately as a dirty, dolescrounging, anarchist than being lauded as someone trying to get publicity for their single issue concern in the hope that the government will do something to stop it. In the end I came to the conclu-

sion that my whole outlook was so radically different from that of the mainstream media that it was a straight choice between being hated for what I am or loved for what I'm not. The latter is not necessarily better since the media's agenda doesn't really represent what the public think but merely what corporate interests would like them to think. And besides, misrepresentation on a large scale has its own dangers.

When a journalist asked the tunnelers where they were going next, some said "Manchester". The anti-runway campaign at Manchester (see Do or Die No.6 - page 82) was then plugged as the 'Next Big

Thing'. I think that if it hadn't been hyped, then it would have been a much smaller campaign. That in itself was not a bad thing; Manchester was a good campaign and worth fighting. I don't think it's too much of a problem at the moment but we do need to be making sure that the media are not telling us what to do.

The attitude towards the press was different at Manchester. A lot of people had seen the Fairmile publicity and aspired to something on the same scale. Some even saw media attention as one of the most important aims of the campaign. The media misrepresentation was that living on site was just a way of grabbing the attention of decision makers by getting in the papers. It became a self fulfilling prophecy as people who got involved as a result of the coverage were those who found the misrepresentation attractive and they brought that attitude with them onto site. The character of the Manchester campaign, at times, seemed to mirror the character of the Fairmile coverage. Being in the papers inspires people to come on site and that's great. But those who see the media as a recruitment tool should acknowledge that while coverage will encourage the movement to grow it will also influence the direction it grows in.

The office spent almost a hundred percent of their energy on trying to get in the papers, sometimes at the expense of getting safety and communications in the tunnels sorted out and setting up a good prisoner support. A lot of pressure was put on Swampy to do media stuff. It was seen by some as for the good of the campaign. Publicity stunts were even organised. That climate was undoubtedly a factor in the Swampy phenomenon.





Something that could have been done better at both Manchester and the A30 was looking not just at the merits of an individual interview, but also at its place in the media trend as a whole. In the same way that the word 'Pepsi coke' on its own reinforces all of Pepsi's advertising, just the appearance of a particular protester, no matter what that person says, can act to reinforce previously written ideas about that person or the road protest movement in general. And in my opinion this is what happened with Swampy.

The media picked on one person and made him the focus not only of an entire campaign, but of an entire movement. This gave the readership an image of action being taken by a 'hero', a famous person, not a diverse group of ordinarily extraordinary people like themselves. This, coupled with the 'It's all just to raise awareness' line, reinforced peoples' disempowerment.

I think that the biggest problem facing us in the aftermath of the spectacularisation of Fairmile is the kind of over-enthusiasm that a lot of us have towards the media. Many people consider that to change the world we must change peoples' minds and that this is best done through the media. But what are we changing their minds for? It doesn't matter what people believe if they are too alienated and disempowered to act on it, and the mass media is above all a tool of disempowerment and alienation. The dangers of becoming too dependant on the media are obvious. The peo-

ple who control the mass media have broadly the same outlook and some of the same interests as the people who own opencast sites and build roads. To get good coverage we risk pandering to their outlook in the mistaken belief that it represents the thoughts of the general public. (People, in general, tend to be more radical than the mainstream media would lead you to believe.) Especially frightening, and again this isn't a problem yet, is the risk that we will start only doing actions that will look good in the papers. Once we go down that path then we might as well just phone up heads of multinationals and say 'What would you like us to do today?'

I think that the media circus surrounding Fairmile presented some opportunities to do a lot of good. We did our best with it and tried to take those opportunities as they came up. But it was by no means an entirely good thing. It shouldn't be seen as desirable and we shouldn't be trying to make it happen again.

Mainstream publicity is a bit like being arrested. It is a fact of life and it is sometimes necessary, but it isn't the point and you don't try and make it happen for its own sake. Whatever your views on the media, make sure you've thought them through. Always try and have an overview on what you're doing. And remember—a press release is a potent tool, use it with care and intelligence or don't use it at all.



PROUD TO BE A PANSEY

(Politically Active Not Seeking Employment)



2: Houses of West Papua's Kombai and Korowai peoples are built as high as 150 feet for a reason—"to see the birds and the mountains and to keep sorcerers from climbing my stairs" says Korowai tribesman Landi Gifanop. Though safe deep in the forest at the moment they are threatened. Timber, mineral and oil companies are invading the forest—but not without resistance. For two decades West Papuan tribes have waged armed struggle against the Indonesian military's invasion of their country and the companies that followed it.



1: "One of the nice things about having a thatched roof on my treehouse is the life content. All the time lizards run around in it, & various insects, spiders etc. A couple of possums nest in it, (once there was a big commotion when a 7 foot snake raided one of the nests—it rained baby possums in my bedroom, the snake ate 2 baby possums then left). Spot-breasted wrens roost in the eaves, they sing duets, one starts the song and another comes in and finishes it up". So writes Hugh Brown who along with a friend built their five-level tree house on a Caribbean beach in Honduras to escape being sent to Vietnam. They used hard wood for flooring, thatch for roofs and, (a tip for camps here) barbed wire for a tensile framework for some of the floors and roofs.

Left: Robinson was a popular Paris rendezvous. Visitors around 1900 enjoyed an evening dance then retired to the tree-tops where their meal was hoisted up to them.

Tree Houses



A tree house.

A free house.

A secret you and me house.

A high up in the leafy branches.

A happy as can be house.

A street house.

A neat house.

A be sure to wipe your feet house,

is not the kind of house for me.

Let's go and live in a treehouse.

"If you hate 'progress' so much why don't you go back to living in trees, motherfuckers!" - US Offroaders.

On direct action camps we create spaces and communities that are windows to the future world we wish to create. One of the most beautiful experiences of camp life is treehouse living. Up in the canopy, surrounded by an amazing abundance of life we begin to feel a part of the eco-system we inhabit—not merely its defender. We wake up every morning, stretch ourselves towards the sky and gaze across the woodland canopy. It's as if we're standing on lush green clouds. We are rocked to sleep every night by the swaying of the branches in the breeze. Activists in Britain first used tree dwellings as a defensive strategy at Jesmond Dene, in Newcastle in 1993. Since then treehouses have got more sophisticated, more difficult to evict and a lot more cosy.

Just as our struggles mirror those of our ancestors and of peoples all over the globe; so too do the shelters we build mirror others past and present. On every continent on earth cultures exist that live high in the trees. In N. India many animist ('all that exists lives') tribes make their homes in the branches (4) while even ground dwellers often add leafy penthouses to their abodes (3). In W. Papua (2) and neighbouring Papua New Guinea (7)



of the World

tribes live, (as the illustrator put it), 'in houses like the nests of giant birds'. In Equatorial Africa and the Americas fragments of previous societies live on. Tree living cultures used to cover much of what is now known as Poland but few living examples still exist. In Europe—the fortress of domestication—apart from the dwellings/barricades of activists in Germany, Britain & Ireland treeliving cultures have been made extinct. Yet they live on whether in the memory of forest rebels like Robin Hood or in the wisdom of childhood. For years children imagine alternate worlds far more interesting than the ones they usually submit to when they leave their treehouses to join the commuter queues. It is no mistake that so many books have their tree dwelling utopias, (eg. Tolkien, S.Donaldson). Even Star Wars sets the tree village living low-tech ewoks against the Techno-Reich of the Empire. In a reminder of previous times Eastern European children often live in their treehouses throughout the summer (5). Probably the oldest treehouse in the world (6) was built in 1692 for the children of Pitchford Hall, Shropshire. Tree dwelling is a proven ecological way of life—an amazing one at that. When revolution has ripened fully we'll see forests filled with treehouses.



Farmageddon!

Confronting Industrial Agriculture



Our movement has had some great successes in the last seven years. Campaigns against infrastructure growth like Manchester and Newbury have highlighted ecological destruction, involved thousands, inspired thousands more, and actually stopped hundreds of projects. However we are in danger of giving the illusion that ecological destruction happens primarily in the realm of 'mega-developments'. In fact the way we grow our food is the main cause of devastation in this country.

Many who have been involved in campaigns against infrastructural growth have increasingly put energy into fighting industrial agriculture—from the destruction of genetic crop test sites to the successful direct action camps at Offham. A 'Farmageddon' campaign was set up as a result of meetings at last summer's Earth First! Gathering and large actions are in the offing. This article then is an attempt to give a background for those who want to get involved along with some suggestions on future strategy.

Britain Post 1945:

Agriculture's War on the Wild

Agriculture has always been ecologically destructive, but the rate of destruction in Britain has increased amazingly since the industrialisation that swept British agriculture after World War Two.

'In 1940, the German Luftwaffe made an aerial survey of much of Britain, especially the east and the south. 'These magnificent photographs', wrote Oliver Rackham in 1986, 'record every tree, hedge, bush, pingo and pond in several counties'. They show that 'except for town expansion, almost every hedge, wood, heath, fen etc. on the Ordnance Survey map of 1870 is still there on the air photographs of 1940. The seventy eventful years between, and even World War Two itself, were less destructive than any five years since'. The commonest cause of this post war orgy of vandalism, Rackham concludes, 'has been destruction by modern agriculture...'

Hedges, ponds, woods and wetlands were cleared aside to make way for new machines and methods.



There were four main aspects of post war agricultural industrialisation that affected the rural ecology:-

- 1- The area of land under the plough was expanded at the expense of woods, marshes, downland, hedges and heaths.
- 2- Farms were enlarged and standardised which resulted in the destruction of many woods, hedges, copses, banks, ponds and streams.
- 3- New ways of exploiting animals were introduced. Many cattle already confined within the fences and daily routine of the farm, were removed entirely from any semblance of their natural habitat. No longer permitted to munch their way through diverse flowery meadows, many have been imprisoned indoors (along with many pigs and chicken). Former pastures have been turned over to crops like barley, most of which is then manufactured into concentrated animal feed. Monoculture replaces diversity. Where animals are left outdoors, farmers have 'improved' old pasture by intensive chemicalisation. Nitrogen fertilisers rain down accompanied by herbicide and grass seed. The old mixtures of wild grasses and plants are replaced with specially bred strains—perennial ryegrasses with evocative names like S24 & S32.
- 4- There has been a massive increase in the use of artificial fertiliser and pesticide on land already under crops. This has almost entirely destroyed the wildlife of the cornfields—the poppies, cornflowers, hares and partridges—as well as disrupting (and often sterilising) the balance of nature in nearby streams, dykes and rivers.²

These four changes in agriculture since WW2 have been responsible for the following mind blowing list of ecological destruction.

Ninety seven percent of British meadows—along with their rich and varied flora and fauna—have been destroyed in the last forty years.³ The expansion of cereal growing during the six years up to 1984 alone was accompanied by the removal of 17,500 miles of hedgerows and the clearance of 93 square miles of deciduous woodland.⁴

Since 1945 Britain has lost around 30% of its rough grazing land, 65% of song thrushes, 50% of lowland woodlands, 50% of its heaths and fens and 140,000 miles of hedgerow.⁵ 80% of British chalk downland has been destroyed since World War Two.⁶

Birds and mammals that feed on soil invertebrates (particularly earthworms) have been hard hit: the sterilisation of the soil that results from the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has robbed them of their

food supply. For example, an English study found a close correlation between badger populations and the abundance of earthworms.⁷

What has happened in Suffolk is pretty representative. In the 50 years between 1933 and 1983 Suffolk saw 38% of her ancient woodlands clear cut and turned over to farmland or cut down and restocked with conifers. Largely as a result 29 species of flowering plant have become extinct in Suffolk between 1950 and 1982, while 189 species have gone from being common to rare. The national populations of most UK Flora have dropped. 12 native flowering plants and ferns died out completely between 1930 and 1984. Agricultural intensification was responsible for two thirds of these extinctions.⁸

Industrial Agriculture's war on the wild is being waged just as hard in the rest of Western Europe. A multi-year Danish study that tracked bird populations found that 24 species of birds, all important farmland species, were more abundant on organic farms than on land farmed industrially. 11 of these 24 species had declined since 1976.⁹

According to the European Commission, twenty five million hectares of farmland in Europe are threatened by soil erosion—an area eight times the size of the Netherlands.¹⁰ One study in Germany showed that five hundred and thirteen plant species are endangered or extinct as a result of agriculture, making it the leading contributor to the decline in biodiversity in the country.¹¹

In this war between the remnants of wild Britain and the marching forces of monoculture nature does not lie dormant and passive. For on the land that it controls, agriculture is in a rearguard battle to stop the wild's constant attempt to reassert itself.

The American radical ecologist William Kotke wrote in *'The Final Empire'*:-

"When the climax ecosystem is cleared for agriculture, the earth seeks by all means at its disposal to heal the wound. It sends in the first aid crew to revegetate the area and cover the poor oxidising and eroding, bare soil.

"If life finds some unnatural abundance of exotic plants there, like soybeans or designer flowers, it calls in all the species of fungus, micro-organism and insects that can eat up that sickly or unnatural life and recon-vert it back into the life stream.

"What this means is, that it takes energy to fight life which is making an effort to rebalance itself. To do this requires fertilisers, poisons, petroleum, steel mills, agricultural universities, polluted waters, dead seas and so on and on..."¹²



Industrial Agriculture and the Global Industrial System

The problems caused by the industrial farm do not end at the farm gate. In industrial agriculture every farmer relies on energy and chemical weaponry from all over the globe. One industrial farm needs a whole global industrial system to back it up.

The effects of a farmer spraying his fields on a brisk spring day not only have ramifications for the local rivers, for the wild leafy shoots sprouting from the bare soil. It also affects places, peoples and ecology thousands of miles away.

The diesel that gives the tractor power to spray the land will usually either originate from the North Sea or from the Third World. If from the North Sea its extraction from its natural resting place under the seabed will have left whole marine ecosystems sterile. Oil spills are even more likely if it originated in the Third World. In the petroleum fuelled dictatorships blood is spilt as routinely as the oil. Whether it's the BP supported Colombian death gangs or the 'Shell Police' in Ogoniland—oil means death. However, for industrial agriculture, oil is its lifeblood.

The industrial way of providing food is so dependent on oil that, by the time the food arrives on our plates, for every calorie of energy in that food, approximately ten calories of fossil fuel energy have been expended to produce it.¹³

After destroying communities and polluting land and sea in its extraction. After providing the power to intensify agriculture and destroy land in its use; agriculturally used oil contributes to the largest change in the biosphere man has yet managed—global climate change. Largely as a result of this oil addiction agriculture is responsible for approximately one quarter of human created carbon dioxide emissions, (as well as, by the way, nearly 60% of methane emissions—a secondary greenhouse gas).¹⁴

Enough about the fuel that drives the tractor, what about what the tractor is spraying? On this particular hypothetical morning of ours it happens to be the fertiliser holy trinity, Nitrogen, Potassium & Phosphorous or NKP as it is usually known. Nitrogen fertilisers are responsible for 80% of nitrous oxide emissions—another greenhouse gas.¹⁵ Nitrous oxide is also one of the main agents behind acid rain—so, used to enhance artificial growth at one end, it wipes out natural vege-



Four fifths of the pacific island of Nauru has been devastated by phosphate mining to produce industrial fertilisers.

tation at the other. Phosphate is found in relatively few places in the world. One such place is the Western Sahara which contains the third biggest reserves of phosphates on the Earth. For its extraction the largest conveyor belt system in the world has been built, and one of the longest colonial wars has been waged.¹⁶

Spain colonised Western Sahara in 1884 but it wasn't until it discovered the rich phosphate deposits that it really became interested, quickly building the infrastructure to export. The population, which had previously lived in nomadic tribes, first began to mobilise in the 1960's. In 1970 a national uprising was effectively quashed by the Spanish Foreign Legion. Five years later Spain handed over Western Sahara to Morocco & Mauritania. The three year old Sahawari organisation 'The Polisario Front' pitted itself through armed struggle against the joint invasion. Most Sahawaris were forced to flee to refugee camps in Algeria, where most still live 22 years later. After many battles Mauritania withdrew totally from Western Sahara in 1978 and since then the struggle has been fought against Morocco. Morocco is the world's largest exporter of phosphates. Despite being desperately outgunned Polisario have managed to maintain a large tract of Western Sahara as liberated territory and have forced Morocco to the negotiation table.

Though the tractor spraying NKP in Norfolk may seem 1000 miles away from Saharan struggles (it's actually 1,700 miles away), they are intimately connected. If one had the time and space one could find almost limitless connections between our hypothetical



Norfolk farm and destruction and enslavement worldwide. However the above examples outline the obvious. For industrial agriculture to produce food in the North, industry must destroy ecologies and communities throughout the South. The post war industrial boom in production is fertilised on the blood of the third world.

And boom it has been. The food industry has more companies in the world's top 1,000 corporations than any other sector. As Industry Week pointed out "*feeding the world is ...quite profitable*". Trade in foodstuffs is dominated by the US company Cargill, the largest private company in the world; it not only trades but also transports and warehouses agricultural and other bulk commodities—grains, oilseeds, fruits, fruit juices, tropical commodities and fibres, meats, eggs, salt, petroleum, feeds, seeds and fertilisers—which it supplies to restaurants, food service institutions, grocery retailers, wholesalers and food manufacturers.¹⁷

While the South is exporting 'resources' to the North, the North is exporting its brand of agriculture—industrial monoculture. The industrialisation process that swept most of the North after World War Two, wrecking ecology and destroying the small farmer was named 'progress'. In the South the moulding of most of the world's agricultural systems into a resource base for corporate interests was dressed up as 'development' and 'aid'.

Post war agricultural development involved 'high yielding' hybrid seeds and petro-chemical inputs. The introduction and spread of this input- and capital-intensive form of agriculture into the Third World, is commonly referred to as, (sickeningly), the 'Green Revolution'. The new 'High Yielding Varieties' (HYV's) require the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and large amounts of irrigation water. Without these inputs, the traditional varieties outperform the HYVs, and (thanks to their uniformity) HYVs become highly susceptible to pests.¹⁸

The 'Green Revolution' pushes out small and subsistence farmers and ties those remaining large farm units into constant reliance on corporate products. This process continues to intensify. India is one of the oft cited successes of the 'green revolution' and is still at the forefront of conflicts between corporate and peasant power. Edward Goldsmith, publisher of *The Ecologist* and co-founder of the Green Party, puts it like this:

'Small farmers cannot afford the inputs needed for industrial agriculture, so they're pushed off the land and into the slums. It's very simple, India has 800 million people, 600 million live off the land. If you adopt

*modern agriculture... and we get farms of 500 acres and we have 2 or 3% of the population producing the food for everyone else—the food is produced by 20 million people. What do you do with the other 580 million?'*¹⁹

This process of dispossession and enclosure really has its roots in the first conquest of modern agriculture and the market system, Britain.

Science helps build a new India



UNION
CARBIDE

A HAND IN THINGS TO COME

This advert for the chemical multinational Union Carbide appeared regularly in the *National Geographic* in the early 70's. Union Carbide would indeed have 'a hand in things to come'. On the 2nd of December 1984 at around midnight the pesticide plant pictured in the advert leaked around 10,000 gallons of methyl isocyanate gas. The city of Bhopal became a literal gas chamber. Out of a population of 800,000, around 10,000 died immediately or in the following few weeks, (a figure backed by UNICEF). That day of death is still killing to this day. Children are born deformed or dead, the land remains sterile. Those who survived the initial massacre, industrial refugee families that fled the chemical cloud, are watching each other slowly die. Official statistics claim that 200,000 were injured but the real number is probably three times that. Blindness, damage to the reproductive organs and the immune system, cancer, kidney, spleen and liver failure are, for the people of Bhopal, just some of the benefits of industrialisation.²⁰



Global Soil Erosion

The machinations of elite power and increased population growth collaborate to destroy our food's very foundation—soil fertility. As a result, agricultural systems throughout the world are now experiencing unsustainable levels of soil loss. Half of the world's cropland is losing topsoil at a rate which undermines its long-term productivity.²¹ Satellite images show huge plumes of airborne soil moving from North Africa over the Atlantic, sometimes producing a dense haze. Estimates of African soil lost to the wind range from 100 to 400 million tons per year.²² As soil moves from healthy to poor, yields drop by about half. Now think what that means when since mid-century, the world has lost nearly one fifth of the topsoil from its crop-land.²³

Enclosure: The Root of the Problem

"The first man who, having enclosed a plot of ground, took upon himself to say 'This is mine', and found people silly enough to believe him, was the real founder of civilisation. How many wars, how many murders, how much misery and horror, would have been spared if someone, tearing up the fence and filling in the ditch, had cried out to his fellows: 'Give no heed to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all, the land to no one.'"—Rousseau, 1753 ²⁴

To understand why the British countryside is like it is, we need to look back to the birth of modern agriculture and the society which it feeds. Just as the industrialisation of the cities was a method of social control rather than a natural result of technological innovation; so too was the industrialisation of agriculture and the dispossession and eventual depopulation of the countryside.

Enclosure, the process by which communally held land (commons) and the people that use it are incorporated into the money economy, is the foundation of industrial agriculture and capitalist society in general.

"The creation of empires and states, business conglomerates and dictatorships...has only been possible through dismantling the commons and harnessing the fragments...[in] the interests of the dominant minority... The market economy has expanded primarily by enabling state and commercial interests to gain control of territory that has traditionally been used and cherished by others, and by transforming that territory—together with the people themselves—into expendable "resources" for exploitation...

Only in this way has it been possible to convert peasants into labour for a global economy, replace traditional with modern agriculture, and free up the com-

mons for the industrial economy. Similarly, only by atomising tasks and separating workers from the moral authority, crafts and natural surroundings created by their communities has it been possible to transform them into modern, universal individuals susceptible to "management".' ²⁵

Although the enclosure of commons has taken place at many different moments throughout world history, it was in Britain between the 15th and 19th centuries that the phenomenon became identifiable as a historical process. It is worth looking at the land war that gave industrial agriculture its birth—because the history of enclosure is the history of our dispossession.

Throughout the middle ages the commons system, unfenced and communally managed strips of land, predominated in England. Though in no way a utopia it did guarantee land to the bulk of the population.

In the 16th century the price of grain was relatively low compared with that of wool. To take advantage of this the elite carried out a vicious campaign of enclosure. Whole villages of commoners were evicted. 'Fair fields full of folk' were turned to desolate sheep walks. The dispossessed peasants became labourers or joined the ever increasing hordes of vagrants wandering through the countryside.

The peasantry did not resign itself to fate, but fought back. Numerous local and regional revolts were waged against enclosure. One of the largest—the 'Kett's Men Revolt'—was started in Wymondham, near Norwich; (450 years later Wymondham would host one of the first anti-road camps).

'In July 1543...a mob of smallholders had assembled under an old oak tree on the common outside the village. They demanded an end to the enclosure of common land. Kett made a rousing speech and the mob marched off to Norwich, gathering strength as they went. Soon Kett's army numbered 20,000 and captured Norwich castle...[Unfortunately, after other battles with the King's soldiers] Kett was captured, condemned for treason and hung. His oak tree has survived...[but the common on which it stands has long since been enclosed and is now fields of oil seed rape.]²⁶

A new class entered the land war around this time. In 1536 Henry the 8th dissolved the monasteries, seizing the land of the Church which covered a fifth of the land surface of England and Wales. Most of this was then sold to middle class professionals such as merchants and members of the legal system. These new landowners had even less respect for the poor than the feudal lords. More and more enclosures were carried out and the protracted struggle between the classes continued.



It was rare for a committed landlord's enclosure plans to be stopped, but resistance continued nonetheless. There were literally hundreds of riots and revolts against enclosure throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. May 1607, for instance, saw a month of sustained and widespread rioting in Northamptonshire, a county in which many parishes had experienced such complete enclosure that road verges represented the only remaining common land. The armies of the landowners put down the rebels, executing some. In spite of this defeat, further enclosure riots erupted in neighbouring midland counties.

With the force of arms stacked against them commoners relied on surprise and collective action. For example on June 6th 1638 a football match on Burnt Fen was the guise for anti-enclosure rioters from Ely and Lakenheath to assemble and destroy the drainage ditches.²⁷

A few years later power struggles between factions of the ruling class would boil over into civil war. After parliamentary victory 1,677 royalist estates were seized by Oliver Cromwell. This signalled the end of feudalism and the coming into birth of the new merchant culture—capitalism.

In this period of massive upheaval many radical movements formed. They ranged from raucous millenarian revolutionaries such as the ranters to the more docile movements like the Quakers. One of the most prominent groups at the time was the diggers.

*'In 1649, to St. George's Hill,
A ragged band they
called the diggers
came to show the people's will.
They defied the landlords,
they defied the laws.
They were the dispossessed
reclaiming what was theirs.
...The Sin of property, we
do disdain,
No man has any right to
buy & sell the earth for
private gain.
By theft and murder, they
took the land.
Now everywhere the
walls spring up at their
command...'28*

The diggers were one of the first groups for centuries to question the very basis of private property. They occupied commons all over the country calling on the poor to join them in challenging the landowners. The first colony at St. George's Hill²⁹ was eventually evicted and most others suffered a similar fate. Despite dozens of occupations they never managed to involve more than (at most) a few thousands. Without the participation of the majority of the poor they were easily crushed in the political clampdown that followed the parliamentary victory. Their vision lives still and on direct action camps the diggers' song is a firepit favourite.

The eighteenth century saw a heightened period of enclosure. Hundreds of thousands of smallholders lost their land and cottages. The 145 years preceding the General Enclosure Act of 1845 saw an estimated 8,000 private enclosures covering around 14 million acres.³⁰

On June 1st 1771 a crowd of women destroyed the fences around Rewhay Common, but were caught in the act and arrested. Another mob rose up and marched on Burton-on Trent where they freed their comrades and carried them away in triumph.³¹

Football was again used as a mask to assemble when a notice was posted in the Northampton Mercury inviting "well wishers to the Cause now in Hand" to a football match at West Handon, on the 1st of August 1795. On the day, a mob pulled down and burnt the fences enclosing the commons.



Our struggles mirror others in the past. Tree houses adorn the branches at Lyminge, where Rank Leisure plan to build a new holiday village. 167 years earlier, labourers burned ricks and smashed machines at Lyminge in one of the first Swing riots.



In the next half-century, despite resistance in many areas, the majority of the remaining commons were enclosed. Without the relative independence they had maintained by working the commons, the rural poor were now merely labourers—wage slaves. It was their labour that grew the nation's food but their meagre pay would often not even buy back enough food for them to survive. The introduction of threshing machines that could do the work of half a dozen men resulted in many families' entire livelihoods being taken away. Starvation, still births, bad health, over-work and early death ravaged the country poor. They had only one choice: to rise up!

Fifty nine years after the Rewhay Common riot, (to the day), Mr. Moyer, a Kent farmer, looked out of his farmhouse window to see his ricks and barns burning. In the next couple of months such bonfires would light up the sky all over the country.

Three months later on Sunday 29th of August, at Hardres, near Canterbury, four hundred labourers marched through the countryside destroying the hated threshing machines. It wasn't until the next day that two magistrates with a hundred special constables and some soldiers turned up, by which time the rioters had disappeared³². The rural rising spread quickly throughout the Dover area and all through September mobs roamed Kent. The 'Swing riots' had started.

With village inns acting as rallying points, news spread from village to village. Inspired by the success of the first actions, communities all over the country began to act. The uprising of 1830 was to become the most successful machine breaking episode in English history.

In Sussex the labourers successfully smashed hundreds of threshing machines; frightened farmers sometimes even destroyed their own as a conciliatory gesture. The Brighton Chronicle, published on the 6th October 1830, reported that the High Sheriff went to a gathering of labourers in Ringmer in an attempt to negotiate with them. He was told:

'We will destroy the cornstacks and threshing machines this year, next year we will have a turn with the parsons, and the third we will make war upon the statesmen.'

Barbara Hammond, author of one of the best books on the Swing Riots, described the State of the country thus: *'Several counties in the south of England were in a state bordering on insurrection; London was in a panic ...and those who had tried to forget the price that had to be paid [by the poor] for the splendour of the rich... [were reminded with] red skies, broken mills, mob diplomacy and villages in arms.'*³³

Farmers and landowners all over the country were receiving letters warning them to pay better wages and to do away with the hated machines before they were 'visited'. Many of these letters were signed Captain Swing. Though the labourers described themselves as 'Captain Swing's soldiers'—Swing was not an actual person. Disparate communities could feel like they were part of something larger than themselves by imagining they were part of the army of (a fictional) Captain Swing. Such non-existent leaders are a regular feature of British rebellions: 'Ned Ludd', the 'Rebecca' riots etc. This is not that different from the way groups in different towns and countries unite behind the banner of Earth First! to feel part of something big.

From the Shaftesbury rioters in the south-west who successfully liberated five comrades from jail, (29th of November), to the northern mob that assembled to prevent burning ricks being put out around Carlisle (12th of December),³⁴ hundreds of thousands were rising up. The crackling of bonfires and the sound of sledgehammers smashing machines could be heard all over Britain.

It was as near to a national movement as so spontaneous and unorganised an upsurge could be. It occurred mainly in the low wage South and East, ie: in the area comprising the confines of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, most of Cambridge, Bedford, Huntingdon, Hertford, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire and parts of the counties of Northampton, Buckingham, Oxford, Gloucester, Somerset and Dorset. It was not the whole of England—but in so far as England remained an agricultural country, it contained the core.

'The 30th of November eighteen hundred and thirty, The Owslebury lads they did prepare all for the machinery,

*And when they did get there, how they let fly!
The machinery flew to pieces in the twinkling of an eye.*

*Chorus: The mob, such a mob you never had seen before,
And if you live for a hundred years you never will no more*

Oh then to Winchester we were sent, our trial for to take,

*...When the judges did begin, I'm sorry for to say,
So many there were transported for life and some were cast to die.'*



The village of Owslebury is one of the nearest villages to Twyford Down, the birthplace of British direct action anti-roads campaigns. The prison which initially housed the Green Anarchist three, was 160 years beforehand stuffed with machine hating labourers. The Special Commission began hearings at Winchester on the 18th of November 1830. In a representative case, of the 245 Hampshire prisoners the majority were found guilty of destroying machinery and extorting money. Their punishments ranged from fines and/or transportation to Australia to hanging. In the end only two brave souls were strung up. Though thousands were arrested country wide, tens of thousands more carried out daring raids without paying with their liberty.

The rising was in the end destroyed by a combination of state force and the simple fact that many of the demands of those rising up were met. For though repressed, Swing is far more of a success than Ludd: agricultural wages were forced higher and the introduction of mechanisation was blocked for decades. The risings may not have developed into full blown social change but then their stated objective never had, for the most, been revolution. The revolts essentially stayed within the economic sphere. Few demanded the land. Instead thanks to moderation, (often influenced by the active mediation of Methodist ministers), they merely demanded the right to survive. The right to be employed, working the land primarily for the interest of the landlords. Considering the emerging struggles in the industrial towns perhaps the greatest tragedy was that the rural labourers never managed to link up with their brethren in the cities. If such a unity had been forged it would have been unbeatable.

Resistance continued through the next century but never on such a national scale. According to the 'official' history the last battle on English soil occurred

on 31st of May 1838, as armed Kentish peasants clashed with troops at Bosendon Wood.³⁵

Due to space constraints the above history is sparse and selective. However its aim is to show in what context industrial agriculture was born. The landowners constantly proclaim that they are the protectors of the countryside; that we predominately urban activists should not interfere. The truth is that they are the destroyers of the countryside. We live in the cities because their predecessors, through enclosure with sheer force, took the land from under the feet of our ancestors and forced them into the slums. Industrial agriculture was born as a means of control over people as much as means of control over nature. This process of enclosure continues—as does the resistance to it.

On the Attack:

The Farmaggodon Campaign

Campaigns against enclosure are growing. One of the main focuses for action in the last couple of years has been against genetic engineering, the enclosure of the seed. In the Netherlands the 'raging diggers' have been digging over genetic test sites, while in Germany activists have been squatting them (see DoD #6). In France, (the only country in Europe growing commer-



The ecology of Offham Marsh, and the camp that saved it from the plough.





cial genetic crops), 100 farmers stormed a Novartis conditioning and storage plan on January the 8th. After looking around they found 5 tons of transgenic maize which they mixed with non-modified maize before humidifying it—rendering it useless. Novartis is claiming the action cost them 1 million US Dollars. Irish campaigners have been out with their spades too, successfully destroying the only test site in Ireland. In Britain over half a dozen test sites have been trashed, along with a handful of office actions. Test site trashing has turned out to be a very effective tactic. If a field experiment is destroyed half way through it has to start all over again, and it has to wait to the next growing season to do so. Minimal action has a disproportionate effect. Such actions are likely to increase in number.

Special Areas of Scientific Interest (SSSI) are the ecological backbone of Britain. More are affected by farming than any other factor. Last April at Offham in Sussex, the first ever anti-industrial agriculture camp was set up to stop the ploughing of a rare wildlife-rich downland. Direct action saved the SSSI (see page 62 in DoD No.6) but the farmer didn't learn his lesson. After discovering he wanted to drain and plough an important marshland SSSI, (full to the brim with newts, water spiders, frogs etc), a second camp was set up. He let a bull into the field and paid a tribe of 11 year olds to throw rocks at us. Despite such tricks we stayed put through August and September until he was ordered by an embarrassed Michael Meacher, (the Environment Minister), to back down. The camps at Offham have shown that tactics which stretch the state at sites like Newbury, can bring farmers to their knees.

Mass fence burning outside Lewes, land occupations in London, camp overs on noxious landowners' estates and a land squat near the original diggers' colony, have been just some of the actions around land 'issues' in the last couple of years. Most have been a result of the formation of the group 'The Land is Ours' (TLIO) which describes itself as 'a landrights movement for Britain',³⁶. TLIO started off as quite a centralised, personality led organisation but thankfully it is now more

of a network, with half a dozen groups involved in active local work. They are planning a number of occupations and trespasses this spring.

Animal liberationists continue to fight against the imprisonment, enslavement and murder that industrial agriculture forces on millions of animals every year. The view of agribusiness towards our fellow creatures is well summed up in a farming magazine.

*'Forget the pig is an animal, treat him just like a machine in a factory. Schedule treatments like you would lubrication. Breeding season like the first step in an assembly line. And marketing like the delivery of finished goods'*³⁷ In the last year the ALF has liberated thousands of animals from such slavery.

Resistance to industrial agriculture is fractured. The media and campaigners themselves build up fences around their favourite 'single issue'. If we are to have any chance of stopping the situation getting worse then we must link up campaigns against genetic engineering, for animal liberation and land 'rights' into a holistic struggle which can adequately take on the landowners.

At the EF! gathering last year there were workshops about setting up a campaign that could do this. Out of those discussions a number of projects are happening. A large land squat is planned in late May to bring together activists. The idea is to take a genetic test field, squat it and turn it into an experiment in ecological agriculture. The land squat will aim to hold the land for a month, and there will be workshops and talks ranging from how to do forest gardening to the history of land struggle.

The newly formed Farming Environment Network will also be touring gatherings and festivals throughout the summer doing educational work. At harvest in August/September there will be a large national action against industrial agriculture.

If we concentrate our energies in places where our actions will have most effect; and if we succeed in uniting campaigners from different 'issues' into a solid front against industrial agriculture, then we can really start to become a threat.

The objectives of the Farmageddon campaign should be primarily to halt further advancement in agri-business technologies, like genetics, agrochemicals and intensive battery farming. It should also aim to educate people on why we need to de-industrialise agriculture and challenge the power of the landowners.

Actions Coming Up!

March 28th & 29th: *The Land Is Ours* is organising a two day occupation (near Luton) in commemoration of the Diggers. **April 1st:** They will also be holding an anniversary trespass on the site of the first digger colony at St. George's Hill. **Late May** will see a land squat (somewhere in Britain) set up on a genetic test field and it is hoped the site will last for a month, contact Norfolk EF! **On June 14th** in Sussex there will be a mass trespass over areas the landed exclude us from. A second trespass will be on **July 5th**. Contact South Downs EF! Sometime in **August** there will be a large action against industrial agriculture, talk to Norfolk EF!



Consolidation:

Resistance is Growing!

*'The 'Dig for Victory' campaigns of the two world wars showed that the British people can feed themselves with judicious land management. In the latter part of the twentieth century we must think in terms of 'Dig for Revolution!'*³⁸

We need to bite the hand that feeds us, and we need to sink our teeth into it *now*. Being eco warriors in the field(s) but passive consumers at dinner time is not good enough. If we are to effectively confront corporate agribusiness then we, the landless, need to develop our imagination and rediscover skills so that we can start to unplug ourselves from the machine, (and unplug the machine itself).

We can create viable agricultural systems by learning from nature and from the many millions of farmers—mostly in the South—who farm much as their ancestors did. The main principle of ecological agriculture is to work with nature not against it. It makes sense to model your agricultural system on the climax ecosystem of your bioregion. In most of Britain it's woodland and a lot of radical ecologists over the last few decades have been working on 'forest farming' or 'agro-forestry' as it's sometimes known. (See 'Forest Farming' Box).

To feed everyone on this island, industrial agri-business requires the dispossession of peoples and the destruction of land, all over the planet. Yet, we could all feed ourselves without importing food or resources at all. Colin Tudge, the author of *'The Famine Business'*, has estimated that if Britain's farming activity was aimed just at supporting our population, rather than feeding cows etc., we would need only a fifth of the land at present under cultivation.³⁹

It's worth stopping and thinking about that fact. Only a fifth of the land presently under cultivation could make us self reliant, if we all went vegan. Even those who don't care about animal suffering should consider the increased burden their dairy/meat addiction places

on the earth. This is also a good point on which to build unity between the movements of radical ecology and animal liberation. Even if his calculations were a bit exaggerated, (and from his methodology there is no reason to presume this), we're talking about at least three fifths of the land occupied by industrial agriculture in Britain no longer needed to feed our population. What would we do with it?

Shock, Horror! We could have wilderness again in Britain. Vast expanses of land could regenerate into the wildwoods of old. Exploding with diversity, and resounding with the sounds of wild animals. A land repopulated with bears, beavers, boars and bison! Earth First! is a movement for the wild, and our re-incorporation in it. The stark battle lines between the wild and the domesticated could fade away as the edges of our forest farms receded into the dappled shadows of the wildwood. Let your imagination run wild!

We are needless to say, a long way away from such a land. At the moment less than 1% of agricultural land is even farmed organically⁴⁰. Of this small percentage of land most is still farmed industrially for profit, using

mechanisation to produce for distant markets. A minute amount of land is under cultivation by ecologically minded folk. For all but the children of the upper middle classes, buying land is just too expensive.

The 'ecological agriculture movement' (if one can talk of one at all) is concerned primarily with buying small farms and selling produce through 'organic box schemes' and the like. Consumers pay a regular fixed amount and in return receive a box of seasonal vegetables every week or so. These small scale local producer-consumer links (bypassing the supermarkets) are a positive trend but they're still well within the realms of the commodity economy and are often assimilated leaving nothing but the ordinary division between producers and consumers.

How then can we, the landless, obtain some land to sustain ourselves outside the commodity economy and learn the skills we need? Quite a few long term EF'ers





are forming together to buy land collectively. A 15 acre patch of deciduous woodland costs around £20,000—a sum beyond the reach of most of us. However twenty activists all putting in a grand begins to sound more feasible—anyone can raise a grand in a year, even if it means a couple of months washing dishes in restaurant kitchens. Seed communities like these will be essential models for future farming but such projects are rare. However there are other ways we can start to grow our own food.

For a start most of us have access to a window sill or two. An old gardening saying is that *'the most productive plot in the garden is the one you can see from the kitchen.'* What then could be more productive than a

few pots and windowboxes filled with herbs on your kitchen windowsill? It may seem a humble beginning but it will develop your green fingers. A significant amount of vegetables can be grown inside the house too.

Our ancestors, the machine smashers and rick burners of 1830, though they had the land stolen from them, leave us an inheritance. At the end of the last decade there were half a million small plots of land, usually between a tenth and a quarter of an acre, available to anyone to rent at around £15 a year¹.

Some rare sites are two hundred years old but allotments really started to multiply after the Swing riots. Faced with an immiserated urban and country populace

reformers supported the growth of allotments for egalitarian reasons. However, the main reason for their spread was the outbreak of 'violent protest'.

Reeling from the riots and rural insurrections of the 1830s the rich gave the poor allotments, thinking it better that they gave reforms than received revolution. The 1843 *Parliamentary Report of the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor* backs this claim up:

'It was not until 1830, when discontent had been so painfully exhibited amongst the peasants of the southern region that this method of alleviating their situation was much resorted to.'

Kent, which had seen the birth of Captain Swing, was one of the first counties to declare for allotments. Though it was commonly thought among the elite to be a necessary evil, many farmers objected for reasons a Kent writer outlined at the time.

'The farmers are apt to think that the holding of an allotment will give the labourer a spirit of independence that will interfere with

Forest Farming

Wherever you are on Earth the most sustainable and earth-friendly way to grow food is the way which is most like the natural vegetation of that area. In each part of the world a different natural vegetation has evolved over the ages to fit perfectly with the climate and other local conditions. In Britain it is woodland.

A forest garden is a garden modelled on a natural woodland and like woodland it has three layers of vegetation: trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. In an edible forest garden the first two layers contain fruit and nut trees & bushes, the ground layer perennial vegetables and herbs. Many gardens contain the same things as a forest garden, but usually each is grown separately, as orchard, soft fruit area, vegetable patch and herb bed. What distinguishes a forest garden is that all are grown together on the same piece of ground, one above the other. A forest garden will produce less top fruit than a simple orchard, less berries than a pure stand of soft fruit bushes, and less vegetables than a simple vegetable garden. But the combined produce of the garden's three layers will create a much larger yield than any single layer system.

The more complete and self replicating an ecosystem the less work we have to do to maintain it. Therefore the soil is not dug, and annual vegetables are not normally included unless they can reproduce by self-seeding. Our diet is significantly less diverse than that of our gatherer-hunter ancestors. Eating a wide range of different foods is good for our health; forest gardening, being a very diverse growing system, produces a wide variety of plants.

Gardens like this have long been cultivated in many tropical countries, and still are in places as far apart as Central America, Tanzania and the Indian state of Kerala, to name but three. Soon we shall see swathes of forest gardens spread across Britain.



the service he owes his master "The more they work for themselves, the less they work for us." ⁴²

The amount of allotments today is dwarfed by the figures then. Nottingham was representative of most towns.

'In those days Nottingham was surrounded by allotments, not in their hundreds but in their tens of thousands, and the great Dean Hole...estimated that in his day, about a hundred years ago, there were some 20,000 of them scattered around what was then an important town but not yet a city, and the home of under 200,000 people—an allotment for about every third family. Most of them, I imagine, were like our family a few decades later, growing virtually all their own vegetables and thereby making themselves independent of everyone else for at least a large portion of the daily diet'.⁴³

Sites are thriving communities, allotment holders cooperate together on many projects. The site where our allotments are, consists of a small dipping valley, with a path weaving its way along the bottom. Once we'd settled in and were well known, every time we walked down the path we'd be accosted by someone giving us their excess carrots, offering us clippings etc. While it would be pushing it to say allotments are anarchy in action, (the rigid boundaries of each plot are rarely broken down), they are definitely an example of mutual aid.

Hundreds of thousands are drawn to allotments, to scrunch the soil between their fingers and see the green shoots grow. Around the same amount of people work allotments as work in the entire 'official' agricultural sector. It's astounding to find that one in 40 households in Britain has an allotment.⁴⁴

With the welfare state (another reform to hold back revolution) being dismembered allotments will become more important than ever. It doesn't matter how hard up you are you can still eat good healthy organic fruit and veg. Allotments teach more people about self organisation than the radical ecological movement ever has.

Andre Gorz, author of *'Ecology as Politics'* has written that the elite, *'...whether conscious or not, has preserved those marginal zones of autonomy formed by the allotments...For as long as workers own a set of tools enabling them to produce for their own needs, and a plot of land to grow some vegetables...[their wage slavery] will be felt to be reversible...'*⁴⁵

Unsurprisingly allotments are under attack, councils are selling them off to raise revenue. Railtrack is threatening to sell off its 10,000 allotments, making an estimated £500,000 an acre. Since the last election the

government has approved the disposal of over 50 allotment sites—many for house building⁴⁶. In Bath the church wanted to bulldoze the St. Stephens allotment site to construct two luxury homes—each with parking spaces for four cars! Activists and plotters set up a phone tree and the threat of direct action seems to have scared the developers off—for now⁴⁷.

Allotments allow us all the ability to learn to grow food. It is no good, squatting land only to find no one knows how to grow anything. In the coming struggle between the landed and the landless, it'll be cityfolk who march out into the land they have been banished from. But it'll be our allotments we'll be marching out from.

Transcendence:

Goodbye to the Countryside & the City

*'Long before 2030 the trend toward ever larger cities and an increasing ratio of urban-to-rural dwellers is likely to have reversed...The proper question is not whether the urban tide will ebb but when, how rapidly, and whether by foresight or happenstance. ...the choice is whether those returning to rural areas in the century ahead will do so, in the main, willingly and expectantly with the appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and skills as homecomers or arrive as ecological refugees driven by necessity, perhaps desperation.'*⁴⁸

We should try to build towards having large self supporting barrios in Britain in the next few years. They could be much like those the Movement of the Landless (MST) have been running in Brazil (see p.88). Such a situation is not as far away as it may seem. Shortly after the war over 45,000 squatted abandoned army camps, all over Britain. With 1,038 camps squatted the government was in a panic. With no way to destroy the squats they tried to assimilate them. It was struggles such as these that ushered in the welfare state. With the welfare state now under attack we are going to have to look again at these collective actions.

More recently travellers have been living on what amounts to barrios for two decades. Throughout the 1980s there were tens of thousands occupying land, in vehicles, trailers and benders. State force has literally driven thousands of travellers out of the country, and discouraged more from going on the road. The introduction of smack has destroyed much of the communal atmosphere that used to exist. Despite this there are still dozens of good sites around the country, filled with radical and green people. In fact many of our best activists come from travelling backgrounds and action camps themselves have become (ironically) some of the safest sites around for travellers to live on.



If we do set up large land communities we will have to make sure that we are prepared. That they are not media stunts or seen by ordinary people as the realm of the young and alternative. We will need to build a real counter-culture not an escapist dystopia.

The conclusion of this overly long article is that industrial agriculture can only be understood and fought in the wider context of industrial society.

The r-evolution we desire will be a long process, there are no short cuts. We will have to build a movement that has the knowledge and ability to both sustain itself ecologically and effectively combat the state.

We must go on the offensive to defend the gains previous struggles have given us and stop the situation getting worse. Most importantly halting the sell offs of allotment sites and destroying the growth of genetics. This is going to take a combination of community organising and militant direct action.

At the same time we can begin to consolidate by learning the skills to grow our own food, live communally and ecologically. We will need to break out of the radical/alternative ghetto that we imprison ourselves in and show that what are horrifically labelled 'lifestyles' are relevant to ordinary people. The amount of people using allotments, growing in their own gardens etc needs to increase. We should use offensive campaigns as catalysts to build up and consolidate the movement.

A campaign against industrial agriculture should understand that without the destruction of industrial capitalist culture the attainment of an ecological society is impossible. We should give ourselves no illusions—transcendence will no doubt be a protracted and bloody process. History, and other struggles world-

wide, show us that however nonviolent a movement is, when the power of the rich and landed is threatened they always reply with hard force. But just as we reject pacifism we too should reject the romanticisation of violence. Transcendence without insurrection is impossible but insurrection, as Alexander Berkman once said, '*is merely the rolling up of the sleeves, the real work is yet to be done*'. Once we have rid ourselves of the landowners, bosses and tyrants; done away with our own ideologies and old behaviour we will be at the beginning of a long journey. Such a path will be mapped by millions of feet, not one Earth First!er.

**Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible!
Land & Liberty!**

Get Active!

For details of groups that are 'going back to the land' contact: The Land is Ours Rural Resettlement Officer c/o The Land is Ours, Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RQ Tel: 01865 722016.

If you want to get involved in actions or in educational work contact Norfolk EF!

Take part in the fight against genetic engineering by contacting the Genetic Engineering Network, PO BOX 9656, London, N4 4JY 0181 3749516. News and pictures of test site trashing can be found on the SHAG website: <http://www.envirolink.org/orgs/shag/x-files.html>

General requests for information, rabid criticism, strange drawings, letter bombs and dead bees etc. can be sent to the author of this article via the Do or Die collective.

Further reading

Understand the Problem '*Food Insecurity: Who Gets to eat?*', *The Ecologist* magazine, Nov/Dec '96, 75 A4 pgs, £4 Thorough analysis on why 800 million people are malnourished, hungry or starving. Published to counter the lies, myths & hypocrisy of the global elite at the 'World Food Summit' in Rome '96. *From the Ground Up: Rethinking Industrial Agriculture*, International Society for Ecology & Culture, 1993, 120 pgs, £6 A coherent overview of the nature of industrial agriculture, excellent though a bit liberal. *Agriculture: The Demon Engine of Civilisation*, John Zerzan, in '*Elements of Refusal*', Left Bank Books, Seattle 1988, £6 Available from Dead Trees. See your worldview collapse before you! '*Colonising the Seed: Genetic Engineering and Techno-Industrial Agriculture*' Gyorgy Scrinis, £3 + 50p postage, 47 A5 pgs. Excellent primer on genetics. Good for helping you understand genetic science as well as the power games at play in modern agri-business. Available from AK Press (see Reviews section). **Learn your History** '*Captain Swing*', E.J. Hobsbawm & George Rude, Pimlico 1993, 384 pgs First published in 1969 but still the best book on the Swing riots. '*This Land is Our Land: The Struggle for Britain's Countryside*', Marion Shoard, Gaia Books, 1997, 522 pgs, £10.99 Good overview of British land issues. Sections on land struggle history and who owns Britain shine, leaving the reformist conclusions out of place. Everyone should read this book. **Plant the Seeds of Revolution** '*The Allotment: Its Landscape & Culture*', David Crouch & Colin Ward, 1988 Everything you wanted to know about allotments, from two long term anarchists. '*Dig For Revolution*' A snazzy little 14 page A6 zine full of useful snippets of advice on allotment growing as well as bits of good eco-anarcho rant. Send an SAE & donation to: Graham, Land and Liberty, 35 Rayleigh Ave, Westcliff-on-sea, Essex. '*How to Make a Forest Garden*', Patrick Whitefield, Permanent Publications, 168 A4 pgs, £14.99 A practical guide to creating a forest garden in a temperate country.



Notes & References

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- 3 'Focus on Meadows' RSNL, England, 1991
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- 16 'War & Refugees: The Western Sahara Conflict', ed. R. Lawless & L.Monahan, Pinter Publishers, London 1987
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- 20 See 'We all Live in Bhopal' by George Bradford, 10p + SAE from Dead Trees Distribution. See also 'Unfinished Business: Bhopal Ten Years After', by Ward Morehouse, The Ecologist, Sept/Oct 1994.
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- 25 The Ecologist, 'Whose Common Future: Reclaiming the Commons', Earthscan, London 1993, p21
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- 27 'Calendar Riots', page 17 See page 151 of this issue for a full review.
- 28 The Diggers Song, Leon Rosselson.
- 29 On St.George's Day 1995 The Land is Ours organised a memorial occupation on the Hill. Wanting to avoid confrontation with the police the organisers fell back from occupying the hill itself, now a golf course, instead setting up nearly a mile away. See Letters section of DoD #5
- 30 See the chapter by Gilbert Slater, 'A Historical Outline of Land Ownership in England', in 'The Land: The Report of the Land Enquiry Committee', Hodder & Stoughton, 1913.
- 31 'Calendar Riots', op cit 27
- 32 J.L Hammond & Barbara Hammond, 'The Village Labourer', Longman, p180.
- 33 Ibid p178
- 34 'Calendar Riots', op cit 27, p16
- 35 Ibid
- 36 Seen as the next big thing after Newbury, The Land is Ours unfortunately used much of its massive coverage to push a reformist agenda and criticise other campaigns:
'There've been a lot of mindless direct action campaigns where there's been a lack of thoughtfulness or creativity. Direct action by itself will do nothing. Absolutely nothing. But direct action mixed with political lobbying can achieve a lot of results'. It continues 'Critical mass [bike actions] is great, but it's got to be very clear that what it's all about is generating political pressure—as opposed to trying to generate change at the time. The traffic jam is a means to an end—not the end in itself', Monbiot: 'Pure Genius?', London Cyclist, August/September 1996, p14).
Of course direct action has (without the aid of lobbyists) done considerably more than 'absolutely nothing'. It has decimated the biggest road building programme in Europe, and radicalised tens of thousands. The conversion of direct action into a lobbying tactic misses the entire point. Actions like Critical Mass or Reclaim the Streets are attempts to 'generate change at the time'. They are not primarily innovative ways of causing traffic jams. The importance lies inside the demonstration not outside in the jams. Space is liberated, a sense of freedom reigns and we create windows into a future world. In a similar vein TLIO saw the land squats as essentially publicity stunts and this led to a number of problems, not least what to do once the cameras were gone. Some Reclaim the Streets activists wrote a good analysis of The Land is Ours entitled 'The Land is Theirs', published in Black Flag in 1996.
- 37 'Hog Farm Management', September 1976, Quoted in J. Robbins, 'Diet for a New America', 1987
- 38 Graham, 'Dig For Revolution', see Further Reading.
- 39 Marion Shoard, op cit 2, page 153
- 40 Organic farming given seal of the skylark', BBC Wildlife magazine, March '98
- 41 David Crouch & Colin Ward, 'The Allotment: Its Landscape & Culture', 1988, p81
- 42 Ibid, p50
- 43 Harry Wheatcroft, 'My life with Roses', Odhams, 1959
- 44 David Crouch, op cit, p239
- 45 Andre Gorz, 'Farewell to the Working Class', Pluto Press, 1982
- 46 'Losing the Plot', The Guardian, p4 Society section, 18.2.97
- 47 For more info on the St. Stephen's allotments campaign tel. 01225-317072
- 48 David, W Orr, From a talk entitled 'The Greening of Education' as part of the Schumacher Lecture Series in Bristol, October 29, 1994



Carry on Camping!

A Round-up of British Action Camps

Since the last issue of Do or Die (printed in late June 1997) 24 different campaigns have either set up camps or continued occupation of ones already established. Usually when we set up a site we expect to be evicted eventually, but we aim to cause so much economic damage that other places are saved in the future—and so far this strategy has worked very effectively in the struggle to destroy the British Roads Programme. (See *'Direct Action: Six Years Down the Road'* on page 1 of this issue.) However the increasing sophistication of treehouses, lock-ons, tunnels and rabid activists have made evictions so expensive that in the last 10 months we have seen five campaigns tatting down (breaking camp) because they'd actually won. With camps all over the country there is bound to be one near you—so find out where it is and then visit, if only for a weekend, and help barricade, build, fortify and generally cause trouble!



Scotland

Faslane Peace Camp

Outside the Trident submarine base is the longest running action camp in the country. Set up fifteen years ago, it's still going strong with convoy blockades, base invasions and de-fencing happening regularly. After boundary changes a

new local council was formed which has decided to evict the camp. Their eviction notice was served in July last year but so far it has not been executed—although it will be soon—so give the camp a phone and get on the national eviction phone tree. Better still go up there and take part in the mayhem. Tel: 01436 820901.

intend to put a road across it! Approx. 250 trees are threatened by this development. We are climbing some of these trees to oppose the land loss of our park. This precious inner city Green Space was



donated to Derby folk by Michael Thomas Bass in 1876. For further details please ring Dorothy Skrytek on: 01332 727237.

Menwith Hill

Menwith Hill Women's Peace Camp is there to campaign against the US National Security Agency (NSA) spy base. Menwith Hill spies on telephone calls, has involvement in economic espionage and plays a large strategical part in any war. It is found 7 miles outside Harrogate on the A59 in North Yorkshire. For more information contact Menwith Women's Peace Camp, outside Menwith Hill US Spy Base, Kettlesing lay-by, A59 near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 2RA, UK Tel: 01943 468593.

Sellafield Women's Peace Camp

Sellafield Women's Peace Camp (SWPC) has been a site of protest against the nuclear/military industry since 1990. The camp takes place the last full weekend of every second month, and is situated outside the visitor's centre at Sellafield nuclear plant, near Seascale on the west coast of Cumbria. The camp is relaxed, the food is good, and new women are always welcome. Recent SWPC actions have involved paint, cement, talking to the public, bolt-cutters, leafletting, climbing and police dogs! There used to be a mixed camp at

new local council was formed which has decided to evict the camp. Their eviction notice was served in July last year but so far it has not been executed—although it will be soon—so give the camp a phone and get on the national eviction phone tree. Better still go up there and take part in the mayhem. Tel: 01436 820901.

Victory at Pressmennan!

Landowners wanted to clear-cut a 13,000 year old oak wood and send the timber to Germany to make BMW dashboards. A vigorous campaign was set up to protect this precious remnant of the Caledonian Forest. A camp was pitched that lasted months, and the trees were filled with ceramic spikes that trash sawmill blades, dropping the value of timber. The campaign succeeded and it looks as though Pressmennan has been saved—for now at least. See 'Pressmennan's WAND' on page 18 in this issue. Tel: 01368 850360 or 0131 228 2193.

The North

Derby city centre tree camp

At 7.00 am 21 Feb a tree camp was established in the Bass Rec park, Derby to save it from being developed. It is the last large open space in the City Centre and includes a grade one wildlife site. The City Council



Sellafield and SWPC would support anyone wishing to set another up. More details from: Sellafield Women's Peace Camp, Box Z, 16 Sholebroke Avenue, Leeds, LS7 3HB. Telephone: 0113 262 9365.

Bingley

The Bingley relief road scheme was put on hold last July following a review of road schemes, but may still be given the go ahead in early April this year. The camp, which was set up on route when the scheme was first aired is still in existence. Campaigners are hoping that its presence will deter the government from proceeding with the road. Not waiting until the decision, the Department of Transport started clearing on route buildings last autumn. Contact: Bingley Anti-Road Campaign, Rye loaf Camp, Bingley BD19 2HZ. Tel: 01274 504626 or 0370 985122.

Bluebell Woods

A 2.5 acre ecological oasis in the heart of Longsight, Manchester, was destroyed to build student accommodation. The camp, which was set up in early August, involved lots of locals and new people. It lasted a month before being evicted by climbers, police and bailiffs. Despite the small size of the land it took the state two days to clear it. For more details contact: 0161 224 4846.

The Midlands

Birmingham

Northern Relief Road

The Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) is planned to stretch 27 miles, and will destroy SSSIs, woodlands and many other important ecological areas. Activists have been occupying the site for five months already. The campaign should be big and could well rival the intensity of Newbury. Construction is currently expected to start at the beginning of 1999. The site is situated in Greenwood, on the A38 between Bassets Pole and Weeford junction, next to the ARC gravel works. Get the 110 bus from Corporation St. in Birmingham city centre to Bassetts Pole then walk 1.5 miles north along the A38 to the gravel works on the left. Tel: 0797 0301987.

Alvis Peace Camp

Peace camp outside Alvis factory, campaigning against the export of tanks and tank kits to Indonesia, where they will be used for internal 'security' as well as repression of the East Timorese. How to find it: Alvis Peace Camp, outside Alvis Tank Factory, North



View, Walsgrave Triangle, Coventry, CU2 2SP. Pager no.: 0336 774173.

Bury St. Edmonds

A camp was set up in December in Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk, to try and stop an access road being built through virtually untouched watermeadows to reach Green King Brewery. Unlike most others, this campaign has not only been started by locals but is still staffed by them—local involvement, not local support is the key. Contact: The Glad Abbott, Watermeadows Defence Camp, Callum Road, Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk, IP33. Tel: 01359 240365 or 01284 760835.

Wales and

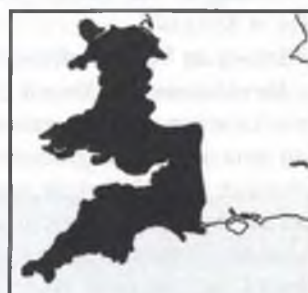
The South West

Brewery Fields Free State

Brewery Fields is an amazing place on the edge of Bangor, North Wales, with areas of woodland, open fields where orchids grow, streams and ponds where children gather tadpoles. Following the 'developers' decision to begin erecting security fences upon the common land of Eithinog and Brewery fields, local people have taken the power back from the forces of babylon and established the free state of Eithinog/Brewery Fields. The so far small, (4 benders and several tents) but strong community is open to all with peace in their hearts. The aim is resistance—to housing 'development' on this beautiful land of gorse, bramble, elder, hawthorn, wild raspberries, alder, oak, countless wildflowers and turf. Security fences seem to have a habit of falling down in the night, much to the annoyance of the developers (North West Wales Housing Association) and to the glee of the elderly residents of the flats that overlook the site. The campaign telephone number is: 01248 351 541 or contact Gwynedd and Mon Earth First! (See Contacts page.)

Victory at Teigngrace!

In early July 1997 camps were set up at Teigngrace in Devon, to stop the enlargement of an already massive white clay quarry. Much was at stake; precious watermeadows would have been destroyed and two beautiful free flowing rivers would have been moved into concrete channels. In mid-October Prescott backed down to the activists' demand for a public inquiry. The camps have been tatted down and the threat to the site is (temporarily) over until the conclusion of the enquiry. (See 'Teigngrace' box in 'Quarry Fighting in the South West', page 79 for more details.) Tel: 0467 622825.





Teddy Bear Woods

Set up mainly by locals in May 1996 to stop the Weymouth Brown Route road, the Teddy Bear Woods camp does not expect eviction until January next year. Plenty of time for you to get down there and build lock-ons, barricades and generally help strengthen their resistance. Tel: 0468 221454.

Dead Woman's Bottom

Four camps were set up at Dead Woman's Bottom in Somerset to stop the construction of a quarry service road. The site was evicted at the end of January by the forces of darkness. For more details see 'Quarry Fighting in the South West' on page 79 or contact: 0174 880144.

Victory at Wymondham!

Developers and Yeovil Council were stopped in their tracks when camps were set up on Wymondham Hill, an amazing bit of greenfield land with a river snaking through it. Lying right next to the centre of town it is an ideal place for Yeovilians to find solace in the countryside. A perfect place, according to the council, to build a supermarket and access road/bypass. Campaigners took over the land and renamed it Wymondham People's Park. The combination of tunnels, treehouses and ground camps deterred the Council and developers and the scheme was cancelled in July 1997. The strange task of taking the site down was then done, with many activists and much of the tat moving straight onto other camps in the area. This is the second time attempts have been made to bulldoze Wymondham and the second time direct action has stopped it happening. For details telephone: 01935 478806.

Radstock Railway

A camp was established in summer 1997 at Radstock against proposals to build a supermarket, industrial units, housing, road and rail line on a naturally regenerated piece of railway land in Radstock. Transport police and heavies have been intimidating the camp and an eviction order was served in September but so far has not been carried out. Tel: 01761 432273.

Ashton Court, Bristol

A semi-permanent camp has been set up in Ashton Court Estate by Bristol people as a focus for the protest against the expansion of Durnford Quarry into this public park near Bristol. Australian multinational Pioneer Aggregates want to destroy 20 acres of the parkland, and dig up a wildflower meadow in their way. This they propose to replant on another field, half a mile away, which is inhabited by badgers. And the badgers who were evicted have just recently reoccupied their sett and need some support to keep in pos-

session. The camp is in woodland adjacent to the quarry. It is a high-profile site in a public park, aimed at getting more local people into direct action. There is no vehicular access, and no alcohol on site. See page 79 in this issue for more info. Camp mobile: 0467 430 211

The South East

Victory at Stringers Common!

Direct action won yet another victory against road building when a road through Stringers Common, Guildford, was cancelled due to the council not being able



to afford a full-on eviction. (See Box 'Victory at Guildford!' on page 2.)

Lyminge

Rank Leisure wants to build a holiday village in the beautiful Lyminge Forest, Kent, complete with a leisure dome, 9 hole golf course, rubber lined artificial lake, studio apartments and parking for 3,400 cars. Since mid March 1997 camps have spanned the site bursting with tents, twigloos and tunnels. There have been eviction alerts on and off for nearly six months so get down there now. (For an in-depth article on the leisure industry and this scheme see 'Lyminge Forest: The Spread of Syphilitic Suburbia' in Do or Die No. 6, Page 72). Directions: From Canterbury take the Folkestone bus to Six Mile Garage and turn left for main West Wood car park for the camps. Tel: 01303 265737 or 0140 536592.

Victory at Offham Marshes!

A farmer in the South Downs attempted to plough up a Special Area of Scientific Interest, Offham marshes. A camp was set up and pressure built up until the environment minister ordered the farmer to back down, see "Confronting Industrial Agriculture" page 40. For more details contact: South Downs EF! PO Box 2971, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2TT.

Camp Rena

Since early September 1997 the first ever Animal Liberation action camp has been sited outside of Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) in Cambridgeshire. HLS is one of Britain's largest vivisection laboratories, torturing and experimenting on 62,500 animals at any single time. Actions have been happening at the site nearly every day and in December it was announced that the camps have cost HLS £3.5 million so far. Tel: 0589 026435 or 01223 311828.



Canbury Gardens

In Kingston, London, the council want to cut down 76 Poplar trees to 'enhance the view' of Canbury Park for dwellers in a posh new estate—Bingley similar logic to the argument the government uses when it says building a motorway through amazing bits of countryside would give the public access to beautiful scenery. Since early November a camp with treehouses galore has been running to defend the site. Local response has been good and one council meeting was besieged by 500 residents. Tel: 0181 287 3118 or 0181 546 1827.

Magnet 'Chicken Farm'

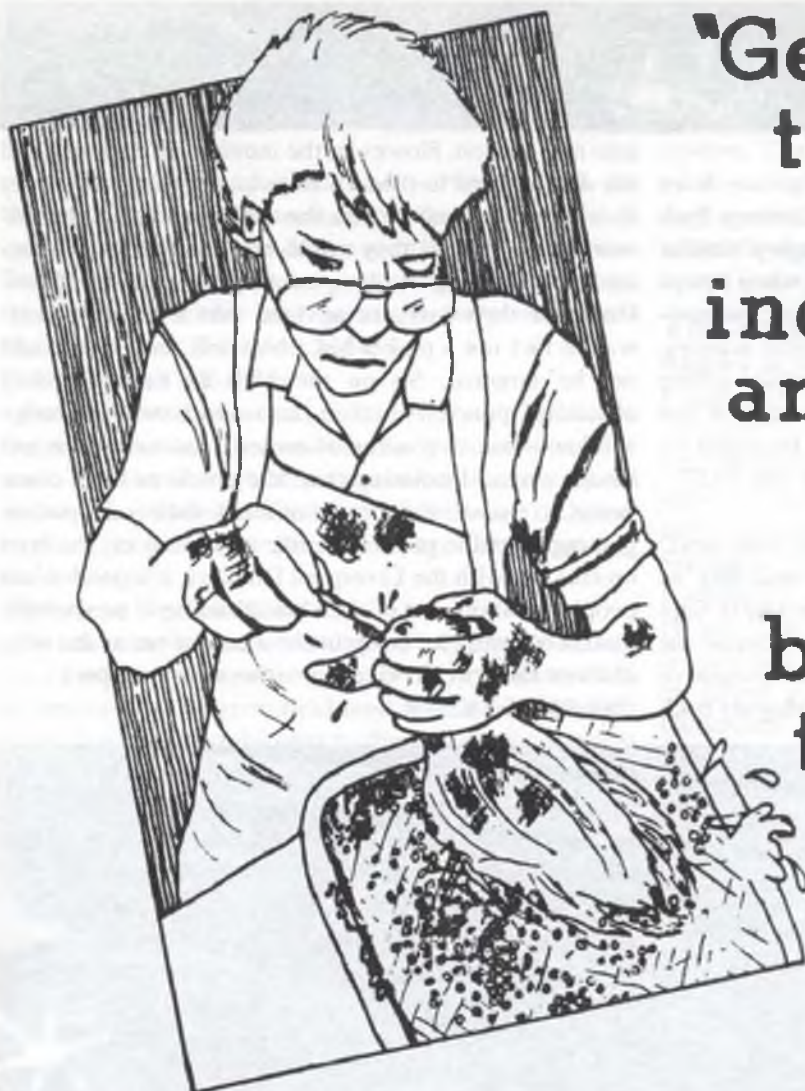
After Animal Libbers setting up camps, who next? Ex-Magnet Kitchen workers, that's who—and they've set up a chicken farm. The workers were sacked in Sept '96 for going on strike. They set up camp outside the 590 acre Cambridgeshire estate of the chief executive of Magnet's parent company. This forced Magnet back

into negotiation. However, the inevitable happened and the deal offered to the strikers was not worth the paper it was written on. When the camp resumed the ex-workers were told they could be found guilty of secondary picketing if they continued to hassle Boss. However their lawyers advised that if their 'picket' was in fact not a picket but a business then they could not be targeted. So on the 17th of February they officially opened a chicken farm—with two free range chickens—on two acres of rented land near their ex-bosses estate. Declaring that 'the chickens have come home to roost' they've continued their occupation, gaining valuable press coverage and annoying the boss no end. As with the Liverpool Dockers, it's good to see people breaking out of their traditional and predictable modes of struggle. Drop in for a cup of tea at the only chicken farm worth visiting without boltcroppers.

Tel: 01325 282389.



Despite attempts by the planners to get rid of them, the Kings Hill community in Somerset continues to show that benders can be palatial rather than squalid; winning the first DoD Brilliant Benders award.



**"Gee, I'd love
to help you
smash
industrialism
and create a
global
paradise,
but I've got
to go clean
oily
birds!"**

Almost daily, we're treated to another horrendous spectacle of this society's headlong rush into oblivion.

And now, the recent oil spill on Washington's coast has provided a chance for hundreds of activists to wallow in industrial filth. The sincerity of the volunteers cannot be denied. Activities such as the sea-bird rescue provide an outlet for the genuine concern and sympathy for the victims of a world gone insane.

Yet, for all the effort, few birds will survive and very few of those will live to reproduce. And this is not even to mention the massive effects on all other marine and shore life.

If, then, oil spill damage is irreversible, all the activity and publicity of the clean-up only reinforces the industrialists' lie that all problems can be solved with better clean-up methods, stricter regulations and improved technology. It validates continued pillage of the biosphere in the name of Progress, and it excuses the inexcusable.

If we look at society as a whole, we see that the tragedies of our time are not "accidents" but consequences of industrial civilization itself. And, sooner or later, we are all victims.

When you've wiped the last glob of oil from your tired hands will you then go off to beg politicians for more regulations and write letters to the oil company president?

Or will you crave a world bountiful with life, where free human communities hold huge festivals on the overgrown ruins of razed factories and cities? Remember, you can't create until you can dream.

**DARE
TO DREAM
TO BE UNREASONABLE
TO DEMAND THE "IMPOSSIBLE"**



The Oil Industry

Pollution, Politics and Public Relations

The oil industry is growing increasingly aware of its serious image problem. Put differently, people are becoming increasingly aware of the systematic abuses of people and nature inherent in the production and processing of petroleum.

Ecological impacts of the UK offshore industry

Here in the UK, the ecology of the North Sea has been devastated by over 30 years of oil exploitation. Now the oil companies are industrialising new, pristine areas, such as Cardigan Bay off Wales, and most significantly the North Atlantic, west and north of the Shetland Isles. These host an enormous biodiversity (including numerous cetaceans—whales, dolphins and porpoises), due to being at the interface between warm and cold water. The North Atlantic is deep water, a poorly understood ecology, recently found to contain rare cold water coral.

The ecological damage of the oil industry is not just from disasters such as the Sea Empress (Pembrokeshire, February 1996) or Braer (Shetland, January 1993) groundings; the impacts are systematic, arising from its ordinary, day-to-day operations [see box opposite]. "The oil industry is environmentally suspect through and through", according to Guy Linley-Adams, Director of Conservation at the Marine Conservation Society. "The latest official figures show a huge rise in pollution. We can but wonder what the figures concealed by the DTI and UKOOA [UK Offshore Operators Association] will show"¹.

In 1996 223 oil spills were reported by companies to the Department of Energy. However, reporting is voluntary, and 82 slicks were detected during 257.5 hours (just 3% of the year) of aerial surveillance by the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry), of which only 12 were reported². Discharges of oil and chemicals have various lethal and non-lethal effects on fish, birds, molluscs, and cetaceans and other mammals. These include cancers, damage to growth, to feathers, scales and skin, to respiratory systems, to livers and to immune systems, and also disturbance of reproductive, feeding and other behaviour. Environmental umbrella group Joint Link estimates that even in good conditions only 10-15% of the oil from spills is ever recovered³.

The first stage in the oil production process is exploration, mainly by seismic surveying. Underwater explosions of around 250 decibels (the human pain threshold is at 140 db) are created with air guns, and

underlying geology deduced from measurements on the reflected sound waves. This has a particularly disturbing effect on cetaceans, who use sound for communication and navigation, and may even be responsible for whale groundings⁴. Fish are also displaced, which in turn affects the cetaceans and birds which feed on them. Studies have shown that the number of cod and haddock is reduced by up to 45% within 5 nautical miles of the blast.⁵ The blasts can damage tissues, including lungs, guts and ears in mammals, and swim bladders in fish.

Then, during the drilling stage, "muds" (lubricants) are pumped down, to keep the drillbit cool and to regulate the flow of oil and gas. They consist of hydrocarbons, heavy metals (including cadmium, mercury and lead) and other toxic chemicals, and also contain corrosion inhibitors, detergents and biocides. Drill cuttings (the removed rock) are dumped on the seabed (totalling over 1.5 million tonnes in the UK North Sea). These cuttings smother seabed wildlife, and significant

Revolution Against the Megamachine

Shortly after the horrific Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989, the American journal *Fifth Estate* published a brilliant essay by George Bradford, "Stopping the Industrial Hydra: Revolution Against the Megamachine". This seminal work moves from an in-depth examination of the Valdez spill and of the impossibility of a true clean-up, (noting the way in which those responsible actually benefit from such disasters) to a wider exploration of petrochemical civilisation and the movements which seek to oppose it. Most pollution arises not from the spectacular disasters but from the insidious everyday workings of 'Business as Usual'—which leaves us with only one option if we seriously wish to stop that pollution. Even the most incorrigible oil-junkie would be hard-pressed to deny these points after reading this essay, such is the persuasive force of Bradford's argument. Available in pamphlet form (with commentary by a humble SDEF! serf) for 60p + 2 x 1st class stamps, from Dead Trees EF!



effects on the structure of ecological communities have been observed several kilometres from platforms⁶. Not only are the rocks surrounding oil reservoirs often radioactive, but cuttings are also contaminated with oil, "muds" and chemicals. 3,826 tonnes of oil were discharged with cuttings offshore Britain in 1996⁷. To get an idea of the scale of the problem here, one must remember that over 6,000 wells have been drilled in the North Sea since 1964.

Rig and pipeline installation causes further disturbance to seabed ecosystems, through dredging, filling and anchoring. Underwater structures will be treated

In September, in response to pressure from the European Commission and from campaigners on environmental impact assessments (EIAs), Energy Minister John Battle announced that he would "fast track" to bring in this year the latest European directive, which requires availability of EIAs on offshore developments for public inspection. However, there was no complaint from the industry at this, perhaps because of its severe need to be perceived as environmentally responsible. Battle went on to say that the new law would not delay offshore projects, nor raise the companies' costs: "It should all be fairly routine", he said.¹⁰



with protective chemicals, which release toxins into the water. From the rig there are discharges due to deck drainage, cooling water from machinery and sewage, plus constant noise and light pollution (including that from gas flaring—also a major source of CO₂).

Most fields contain water as well as oil and gas. This "production water", containing both oil and chemicals, receives only very simple treatment before being discharged. As fields mature, the quantity of production water increases as the oil decreases, and may constitute up to 94% of production⁸.

The scale of chemical usage in the North Sea is not documented; however discharges of production chemicals are estimated at 6,000 tonnes per year (30% of quantity used), plus 84,000 tonnes of drilling chemicals (57%).⁹

Impact of oil in developing countries

In developing countries the environmental impact of oil operations is magnified many times, and this severely disturbs the lifestyles and livelihoods of communities living nearby. This is well documented, particularly in the Shell/Ogoni case¹¹ (although some reports suggest that the current Caspian Sea oil rush makes Nigeria look sparkling clean¹²). It is worth noting that on top of the direct impacts, oil—due to its sheer value as a commodity—aggravates tensions between rival ethnic groups and with central governments over royalties and compensation. In many cases this leads to brutal repression by the police and military to keep dissent under control.

The same patterns of exploitation appear the world over—look for example at BP's collusion with the mil-



itary to "disappear" protesters in Colombia¹³; at the use of forced labour by Premier and Total in Burma¹⁴; at the devastating impact on tribal peoples by Mobil¹⁵ and Shell¹⁶ (separately) in Peru, by Texaco previously and now Occidental in Ecuador¹⁷, by Occidental and Shell in Colombia¹⁸. A less explicit form of abuse by oil is in political relations—note for example the West's deafening silence over the bloodbath in Algeria, a country where BP has substantial interests.

Most oil in developing countries is produced in militarised or semi-militarised zones. Some of the arms recently sold to Indonesia under Robin Cook's "ethical foreign policy" have been sold on the condition that they are available to protect UK business interests (notably contractor Amec) in the giant Natuna gas field in the South China Sea, whose ownership is disputed¹⁹.

Many wars are fought over the ownership and control of oil. The first round of licensing for oil around the Falklands occurred this year, now deepwater technology has become available. Chechnya's secession from Russia was only worth fighting over because of the strategic pipeline which goes through Grozny, carrying Caspian oil to the Black Sea ports. The conflict came to an end when Yeltsin realised that his military operation had cost more than re-routing the pipeline²⁰. And since Indonesia's brutal invasion of East Timor twenty years ago, it has worked with Australia (which has kept rather quiet about human rights), to develop the Timor Gap for oil exploitation²¹. The greatest area of conflict over oil of course remains the Middle East, which supplies 38% of the world's oil, and 51% of the US's. It is expected to supply 48% of world oil by 2010²².

Climate change

Perhaps the most fundamental impact of the industry is climate change. The predicted changes over the next 100 years will be faster than any for at least 10,000 years. The possible and likely impacts are reported not just by "scaremongering" green campaigners but by the Second Working Group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Flooding and coastal erosion currently threaten 46 million people, and this could rise to 92 million people with a 50 cm rise in sea level, resulting in massive population migration, and loss of infrastructure of up to 10% of GDP in some countries. Freak weather events are likely to cause much damage. "Climate change is likely to have wide-ranging and mostly adverse impacts on human health, with significant loss of life", through heat waves, extreme weather events, contaminated water supplies, air pollution and increased transmission of disease, including malaria (threatening 60% of the world's population), yellow fever, cholera and giardiasis. Impacts

on ecosystems will be huge, with major disruption to agriculture and numerous species extinctions²³.

"Experts believe that the disappearance from the Californian coast of 4 million sooty shearwaters is the first real evidence of changes in natural ecosystems caused by global warming. The results of monitoring between 1987 and 1994, recently published in 'Global Change Biology', revealed a 90% decline in the sooty shearwater population in seven years. Richard Veit of the City University of New York, senior author of the report, believes the cause is an increase in ocean temperature, which in the past 20 years has caused a 70% reduction in the plankton which the birds eat."

(Source: BBC Wildlife magazine, April 1997.)

Worst of all, the effects of radical climate change are highly unpredictable [the "broken thermostat effect"] so in some cases the impacts could be even worse than already forecast. One recent model suggests that the change in ocean salt concentration due to melting ice-caps will impact upon the mechanisms powering the Gulf Stream, and eventually reverse it. The result would be the delivery of cold Scandinavian water to the UK, instead of warm water from the Gulf of Mexico, and could lead to an average temperature *drop* in this country of up to 10°C.

There has already been a measured mean global temperature rise of 0.6°C since 1860²⁴. The maximum tolerable degree of climate change suggested by the United Nations Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases (AGGG) is a further 1°C rise. Beyond this, there may be "rapid, unpredictable and non-linear responses that could lead to extensive ecosystem damage"²⁵ (such as the emission of trapped greenhouse gases due to thawing of the permafrost, and evaporation from the sea)—also known as the 'runaway greenhouse effect'. If we accept this maximum, the IPCC's figures give us a total quota of 225 billion tonnes of carbon that we can burn, in the whole of the rest of the human race's future²⁶. This figure assumes an immediate halt to deforestation, and ignores non-linear effects; it also ignores the fact that climate systems take some time to reach equilibrium—even if we stopped producing CO₂ today, it could be a few decades before the average temperature stopped rising. This corresponds to 40 years of fossil consumption at current levels (6 bn tonnes carbon / year), and about a quarter of the world's proven reserves (820 bn tonnes²⁷). The conclusion is that the human race cannot even afford to burn the fossil fuels it already knows about. That the oil and gas companies continue to explore for *new* reserves is indefensible.



Worse still, not only was no compliance mechanism established, but the final agreement involves several loopholes. In particular, 'carbon trading' is allowed (ie. big polluters such as the US buying increased CO₂ emission rights from other countries) with as yet no agreed rules or restrictions. Some economists now predict carbon emissions to become the next major commodity on the global markets. Countries are also allowed to create more 'forest sinks' [to supposedly absorb carbon] rather than achieving their agreed targets, thus avoiding having to even meet the pitiful targets set for fossil fuel reduction, while covering their land with cash-crop monoculture. Since 'carbonomics' is far from being an accurate science, insufficient afforestation could lead to the global net CO₂ reduction being even less than the 5% target.²⁸ Thus, all in all, there is very little pressure for countries to reduce their emissions.

Oil industry sponging off the state

A characteristic of oil production world-wide is the extent to which government supports the industry (as well as not challenging it—as at Kyoto). In the UK, with substantial markets for petroleum products, we don't suffer extra-judicial killings by the state, yet we do still see extensive government "welfare" for the industry.

The Department of Trade and Industry is the regulator for the oil and gas industry, and is responsible for approving new developments. It grants production licenses, lasting three years initially, for companies to explore and exploit "blocks" of about 100 square miles. "Rounds" of licensing occur every year or two, and licenses are awarded to whoever is thought likely to *extract the most oil and gas*²⁹.

The DTI's work as environmental regulator of the industry is hopelessly inadequate, at least partly because of the conflict with its other role—"to maximise the economic exploitation of natural resources". It relies mainly on the companies' self-reporting of oil spills. When inspections do occur, they are by appointment, rather than through random surprise checks. It remains to be seen whether the Labour government lives up to its promises to improve on both these issues. Since the 1971 Prevention of Oil Pollution Act, the DTI has only made one prosecution³⁰. Meanwhile, information about the environmental records of the companies is not available to the public. The Marine Conservation Society had to wait nine months to receive such information, having refused to pay over £4,000 to search the database itself. While the DTI refuses to pass on information about the companies, all correspondence from environmentalists ends up on the



The Sea Empress at Milford Haven

It was hoped that December 1997's Kyoto summit, which set legally binding targets for CO₂ emissions, would be a turning point. However, even while one of the worst 'El Nino' weather systems of this century raged across the Pacific, any really meaningful action on climate change was blocked by Japan, the US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, plus of course the fossil fuels industry. After a week and a half of haggling, the final agreed proposal was condemned by all of the major environmental groups present (Climate Action Network, WWF, Greenpeace and FoE). It offers a global 5.2% cut in emissions by 2012 (compared to 1990 levels) shared between the industrialised nations, ranging from an 8% and 7% cut for the EU and US respectively, to an 8% *increase* for Australia and 10% increase for Iceland. To put this in perspective, the IPCC recommends a 60-80% cut in the burning of fossil fuels, and the Alliance of Small Island States (whose very existence is threatened by climate change, especially since they don't generally have the money to build extensive flood defences) proposed an initial 20% cut in CO₂ emissions by 2005, followed by bigger cuts thereafter.



desk of UKOOA, the industry's trade association³¹. A leaked letter from John Battle in September detailed his collusion with the industry on a strategy to deny Greenpeace publicity for its climate change campaign, and to limit its effectiveness by litigation³².

Most scandalous of all is that the UK *gives* its oil and gas to companies *for free*. Companies pay "rent" for a license to operate in an area, but beyond that any petroleum they remove and sell is theirs to keep, gratis. Whereas in most countries it is paid for in Royalties and tax, both have been abolished for new fields in this country. For fields approved since 1993, the only tax is corporation tax, the tax on doing business which companies pay whether they are making shoes or selling toothpaste³³. While proponents of received economic dogma will argue that without such a fiscal policy (the second laxest in the world after Ireland) companies would be unable to operate in the small and complex UK fields, this handout to one of the world's most profitable industries jars with the government's cuts to welfare for people who actually need it, and constitutes a clear case of corporate welfare. Although there is some concern in the industry about the taxation review for the spring 1998 budget, John Battle has promised no shock oil taxes. "We do not want to drive people away", he said³⁴. The first New Labour budget in July 1997 removed the levy on North Sea gasfields.

Don't panic—the industry is working on it

The UK oil industry has a devastatingly sophisticated public relations machine. A vast quantity of environmental reports and funding of environmental

groups allow it to portray itself as the reasonable party, "engaging in debate". Those who criticise a company in the way it wants them to are easily dismissed as ill-informed (but thanks for your comments anyway), while it is "violent extremists" who get hot-headed and take direct action.

Recently however, the industry has increasingly been allowing its critics to speak publicly, and it is keen to be seen to get involved in "dialogue", to work "in partnership" with environmentalists. Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have both had meetings with BP and Shell over the summer. This tactic too is highly effective. By engaging in discussion, campaigners lose their critical distance; their views are compromised and their positions de-radicalised, and they become less able to openly discuss the real problems of the industry. Meanwhile, the real radicals are isolated as extremists, and the environmental movement has been nicely cut in half.

Long debate about single issues keeps people from pinpointing the industry's fundamental, systematic problems. Shell's operations in Nigeria are claimed to be a one-off slip-up of good practice, and can be resolved by tighter business principles and more "consultation with communities". Controls on leaks, spills and discharges can always be tightened, and then of course there is the universal faith of industrial environmentalism, Technology.

Enter climate change

Climate change presents a different kind of public relations problem, in that it presents a threat to the industry's very existence. Burning of carbon releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which traps the sun's rays and influences climate. It is as simple as that, and no new technology will change it.

Against strong consensus among scientists and even politicians, the American oil majors, led by Exxon (Esso) and co-ordinated through the Global Climate Coalition (GCC), continue to publicly state that the science of climate change is unproven³⁵. They know that this position is not credible in political circles, so instead they argue that the economic costs of cutting CO₂ emissions are just too high, and that unless developing countries also cut their emissions, a bias will be created against US competitiveness. (Or, in other words, the huge global bias in favour of US competitiveness would be reduced). Considerations of equity, of the world sharing its ecological quotas, don't seem to even get mentioned. Although the GCC was largely laughed at in Kyoto, its real power is back home in the US, and it had won the battle before Al Gore's plane even took off. The GCC spent \$13m on advertising in





the US in 1997. Meanwhile the Senate passed by 95 votes to zero a resolution saying that the US should reject any treaty which harms its economy. Congress has been similarly malleable.

Europe gained environmental brownie points for its Kyoto proposal of 15% CO₂ cut by 2010, and the UK for its 20% (although this is due to the replacement of coal-fired power stations with gas). In this atmosphere of environmental self-congratulation, the European oil companies simply cannot, in PR terms, get away with the hard-line position adopted by the US companies. Keen to be seen to be doing as much debating as everyone else, several, including BP and Shell, have made public statements that climate change is (probably) happening due to human activity. These statements have weakened the US companies' position.

The large environmental NGOs have congratulated BP and Shell for their "progressive" attitudes, and for upping their investments in renewable energy in 1997. This congratulation has been justified by some as widening the split in the industry; however it sends out rather confusing messages, and risks creating a corresponding split in the environmental movement. The fact is that companies cannot reduce their hydrocarbon output in any meaningful way, as the resulting loss of profits would lead to massive disinvestment by shareholders, and probably to the sacking of directors by the institutional investors. The "action" BP and Shell have offered is more debate, more investment in technology, and emphatically not a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels. Meanwhile they divert attention from the real problem by pointing to their cuts in emissions from refinery operations.

Thus we see that the companies cannot save us from climate change. Kyoto has shown that the government will not (or cannot) help either.

This means we will have to dismantle the oil industry ourselves.

Further reading:

'The Prize—the epic quest for oil, money and power' by Daniel Yergin, pub. Simon & Schuster 1991—The classic text on the history, politics and culture of the oil industry.

Ignite, issues 1 (Nov 1996) & 2 (Dec 1997), from Platform (address below)—satirical free newspaper looking at the oil industry, TNC culture and London transport. #1 focuses on human rights and #2 on climate change and addiction.

Shell Alternative Annual Report, 1997, by Project Underground (address below)—in depth analysis of

Shell's PR rhetoric and the reality in Ogoni, and how the new development at Camisea in Peru is going the same way.

Index on Censorship #4, August 1997 (tel. 0171 278 2313)—focusing on oil and human rights, especially in the Caspian Sea region.

'Crude operators', by Andrew Rowell, in *The Ecologist* Vol 27 No3, May/June 1997, p.99—on general trends in the industry toward frontier areas, and the impact of these trends on people and nature.

'Putting the Lid on Fossil Fuels—why the Atlantic should be a frontier against oil exploration' by Chris Rose, Greenpeace, 1997—the basis of Greenpeace's 'No new oil' campaign: carbon logic argument for ending fossil fuel use, plus the ecology of the Atlantic Frontier.

Corporate Watch #5/6, Winter 1997/98, pp.30-33 (see Contacts and Reviews, this issue)—three articles: BP's corporate culture and power structure, and personality of Chief Executive John Browne; analysis of inadequate oil regulation by DTI; argument against trusting oil companies to develop renewable energy.

Oil, Shell Briefing Service, 1990—The basic, easy-to-understand introduction to what the oil industry does and how it does it—given by Shell to its employees. Available free with a good blag from Group Public Affairs (tel. 0171 934 5293).

'Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War, 1973-92' by the Midnight Notes Collective, Autonomedia 1992. Useful and thought provoking autonomist analysis of the Gulf War and the global oil economy.

Contacts:

Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5BU, 01989 566 017, www.mcsuk.mcmail.com - On the ecological impact of the UK offshore industry.

Project Underground, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94703, USA, tel. 001 310 705 8983; project_underground@moles.org; www.moles.org - On the impact of oil and mining in the South.

Oilwatch, 0171 435 5000 - Support and networking group for groups affected by oil in the South, especially South America.

Climate Action Network UK, 49 Wellington St, London WC2E 7BN, 0171 836 1110 - Information exchange on climate change. Publishes simplified explanatory briefings on the science, the policy process etc.

Platform, 7 Horselydown Lane, London SE1 2LN, 0171 403 3738, platform@gn.apc.org - On oil and corporate culture generally, and especially BP.



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- 10: Patricia Nicol, 'Government clamps down on oil projects', in Offshore Journal, p.1, supplement to Aberdeen Press and Journal, 11/9/97
- 11: More information: Project Underground, Shell Alternative Annual Report (below), or contact Delta (see Reviews and Contacts this issue).
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- 13: Contact: Coalition Against BP in Colombia, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX, 0171 357 0388; or see Gillard, M, 'BP are oil rush villains' in Guardian, 11/9/96; or Ignite #1(below), p.1 and #2, p.13
- 14: Contact: Burma Action Group, 0181 341 9115; or see Ignite #2 (below), p.16
- 15: Contact: Survival International, 11-15 Emerald Street, London WC1N 3QL, 0171 242 1441
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- 17: See Index on Censorship #4, 1997 (below), pp. 153-162 & 171-176
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Putting a Spanner in the Oil Industry's Works

In the UK, with little wild space left, Earth First! has focused more than elsewhere on taking the fight to industrial capitalism itself. This has been done by attacking the things the industry feeds on—such as transport infrastructure, or aggregates from quarries. Now, as a movement, we are ready to go to the heart of the beast—the oil industry.



Sea Defence Alliance disrupts seismic testing off the Californian coast

Imagine a world without oil. A world without pollution from pipelines, tankers, rigs, refineries and traffic. A world in which goods could not be transported around the globe more cheaply than producing them locally. A world where people and nature were not systematically abused for the sake of a commodity on which all economies depend.

1997 has seen a definite increase in action against the oil industry. Greenpeace has been campaigning against new oil developments around the world, including the Atlantic Frontier in the UK. The campaigns have all been in ecologically sensitive areas, perhaps so as to win the support of Greenpeace's traditional whale-loving constituency. However, the arguments have been about climate change, and in Greenpeace's core argu-

ment the logic is impeccable: if we fully exploit even just the oilfields already in production, the impact on climate will be devastating; therefore it makes absolutely no sense to be bringing in *new* fields. Their campaign has involved applying for licenses to manage the North Atlantic oilfields (which it was refused because licensing depends on how much oil the applicant wants to extract, and Greenpeace wanted none), occupying the rock of Rockall in the Atlantic, which led to the UK government relinquishing its claim to the 200 miles of territorial waters beyond it, and blockading seismic ships—as a result of which, there was *no* useful seismic data available to the oil companies from the Atlantic Frontier last year. PGS (the seismic company involved) is a small £2-3 million business—it lost about £1 million in 1997. Greenpeace also occupied the BP drilling platform Stena Dee for nine days, and took the government and companies to court over not carrying out environmental impact assessments on the North Atlantic developments. The case was eventually thrown out on a technicality, for not being lodged early enough.

Greenpeace are weaker on the solutions side. They have a tendency to overestimate the capabilities of solar power (indeed it is rather easy to succumb to the straightforward, unsophisticated “switch to renewables” argument). They suggest that we can support current lifestyles without any reduction in total energy consumption. They have also been criticised for giving too much praise to BP and Shell for their “efforts” to address the climate change problem. Still, Greenpeace's radical position on “no new oil” has won perhaps unprecedented support from the grassroots movement. When BP tried to freeze Greenpeace's assets, there was a strong backlash from the environmental movement generally—including Earth First!, the Green Party, Friends of the Earth and other groups, with the result that BP backed down.

In May 1997 the Crude Operators gathering in London brought together the big NGOs with Earth First!ers, human rights groups and indigenous campaigners from Nigeria, Burma, Indonesia, Latin



America and the Middle East, as well as a number of veteran "independent" campaigners. The gathering was mainly used to share our understanding of how the industry works from various angles, and was followed by an action highlighting New Labour's regressive position and the appointment of BP's David Simon as a minister—black slimy stuff was tipped on the entrance to the Department of Trade and Industry, while "Blair's Pals" (BP) drilled for sleaze. Since then there has been a gearing up for action by lots of groups against the oil industry.

From the Earth First! gathering came the 100 Days campaign, a wide coalition of anti-oil groups focusing their efforts around the build-up to the Kyoto climate summit. Actions have included occupation of Chevron's offices in protest at their Cardigan Bay development, disruption of an oil industry/government conference, publicity for the Colombia situation at a BP Chemicals Open Day in Hull, several visits to company directors' houses, and numerous forecourt pickets and visits to company careers presentations at universities. Some more ambitious and high-profile direct actions are also in the pipeline.

The significance of the UK

Of the 90 countries in which oil and gas have been found, the UK holds only 0.4% of the oil, and 0.5% of the gas; however it is responsible for 4% of oil production and 3.1% of gas production. Meanwhile the UK consumes 2.7% of the world's oil, and 3.2% of its gas (by contrast, the US consumes 25% of world oil).¹

While not having huge amounts of oil and gas in its territory, the UK's significance lies in its status as a corporate and intellectual centre for the industry, and it is for this reason that an effective attack in the UK would knock the industry. One of the three oil Futures Exchanges in the world is in London (the International Petroleum Exchange, by Tower Bridge); two of the "Seven Sisters" (the dominant Western oil companies)—BP and Shell—are based there (the other five are American—Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Chevron and Amoco); and it is in the North Sea that much of the world's technology was developed, in order to make its relatively small and complex fields economically viable. The North Sea is also important as a major source of oil and gas for the European market, as long-distance transportation is expensive. To give an idea of scale, the industry predicts capital investment of £19.7 bn on UK offshore between 1995 and 2000, one fifth of total UK industrial investment.²

There is also the "universal nimbyism" argument: UK Earth First! is unlikely by itself to stop oil production and consumption *worldwide*; our responsibility is

to get it out of our backyard, while it is up to others to deal with theirs. There should certainly be international networking on this, to share tactics, information etc. A group came out of the Encuentro gathering in Spain in August 1997, committed to setting up an international anti-oil activist network. A three-day fringe meeting at the Geneva gathering of People's Global Action Against Free Trade in February 1998 developed this network further. Contact details are below (Action Globale).

Where does it come from?

The North Sea has been exploited for oil and gas for over 30 years. The fields fall into three main areas: the Southern (between the latitudes of north Norfolk and South Yorkshire)—all gasfields; the Central (Edinburgh—Stornoway)—both oil and gas; and the Northern (east and northeast of the Shetland Isles)—mostly oil. The 16th licensing round in 1995 opened up the new areas of the North Atlantic west of Shetland, Cardigan Bay off Wales, and Morecambe Bay in the east Irish Sea. The 17th round in April 1997 reflected the popularity of west of Shetland by awarding 76 blocks there, plus 28 north of Shetland, and just 10 in the North Sea. Bidding for the 18th round is expected to be opened early in 1998, and is likely to put the remaining 800 North Sea blocks on offer.

Proven reserves in the deep water west of Shetland comprise about 5% of total UK discoveries³, a figure which could rise to 25% with new discoveries⁴. With most North Sea fields reaching maturity and their margins falling, and any new finds there being generally fairly small, companies are looking for more profitable new fields. BP (as operator), in joint venture with



Demo against BP for their use of death squads in Colombia



Shell, leads development of the area: the Foinaven field came onstream in December 1997, and Schiehallion is to follow soon. Sultven was found in 1997, but is still going through appraisal. The Clair field in the area is huge, but as yet not economically exploitable. A few gas fields have been found, such as Texaco's Victory, but more will probably be needed before construction of a new pipeline can be justified.

The real significance of the Atlantic Frontier (as it is known) is its technology, the UK's great strength. With 80% of the global increase in production outside OPEC expected to be offshore, the deep sea is a very important new growth area. While much deep sea work is going on in the Gulf of Mexico, the North Atlantic has the added complication of extremely harsh weather conditions. Indeed BP's Foinaven field was originally planned to come onstream in 1995; it is because BP underestimated the difficulty of the conditions that it has been persistently delayed. (Even now, in its first month onstream alone, it has already had two spills; there are also suspicions that oil is leaking from its 'subsea manifolds'—which previously buckled due to the depth of the water and had to be replaced.) The technology lessons of the North Atlantic are now being applied to offshore West Africa and offshore Western Australia.

Where is the industry going?

The entry into the North Atlantic is part of a worldwide trend in the oil industry to move into "frontier" areas, areas which were previously untouched. This has been led by rapid development of new technology, including seismic equipment, drilling techniques, sub-sea facilities, floating vessels, tough ice-proof rigs etc. New fields are more profitable than "mature" fields, and companies' share prices depend on their constantly acquiring new exploitable reserves.

Downstream (in refining, marketing and chemicals), margins have recently got much tighter due to worldwide refinery over-capacity, the cheap supermarket petrol stations and the Esso Pricewatch campaign. Thus there has been much consolidation in the sector—such as BP and Mobil merging their European downstream operations, Shell buying Gulf Oil (Chevron's UK downstream company) and shared petrol stations with other facilities (such as joint ventures between Texaco and McDonald's, and BP and Safeway).

Direct action targets?

For direct action to be effective, it must be used as a communication tool as well as a "weapon" to raise costs. The latter approach will always be limited by the number of people you have got; the former is necessary to build on that. For example, the roads programme has

been cut by far more than the cost incurred by obstruction, because of direct action's success at arguing the point. What swung the roads debate was a lifestyle that could inspire, excite and interest people, together with sustained campaigning which kept the issue going. We must be imaginative, to find ways of using direct action effectively, rather than just turning out on actions because we feel we ought to. Think about how and where the industry works, what it depends on, and which bits are most vulnerable.

Oil already has quite a bad public image. What is needed is an upping of the level of campaigning. The standard garage forecourt picket has got rather dull, and we've all seen it before. It has a symbolic role, as the forecourt is the interface where most people visibly come into contact with the industry. However, we must be more creative in these actions, to get away from the ritualised scenario of a small number of young activists standing with banners outside the forecourts or climbing on their roofs. Why not hold a party on a forecourt, or decorate the place—*transform* it into something more positive? (This was done at 'Strike Oil' in North London during the Kyoto conference). Perhaps target one of the supermarket forecourts—to communicate that it is not just Shell or BP or Chevron who are criminal, but oil generally.

There is also the problem of not having any clear useful message that can be given to the average car-driving consumer. I have got extremely frustrated with people on Shell station actions redirecting customers to the Mobil down the road, although it is difficult to know what alternative there is. One can't really tell the consumer to just stop consuming oil. The forecourt can only be one in a set of tactics. Meaningful communication with people may be easier at a town-centre stall, as this is more of a neutral space. Subvertising too is always useful (a full-size billboard appeared in Norwich on Shell's 100th birthday in October). However the fight must also be taken to the supply side.

As a movement our real strength is in defending natural sites from the encroachment of industrialism. While a community is living on such a site, it is (relatively) easy for someone else to turn up at the location and get involved, and interest can be sustained in the issue. Such defensive tactics can be used to fight expansion of oil infrastructure—for example new service stations. More importantly—although we aren't likely to get any new refineries in the foreseeable future—as Manchester Airport's second runway is built (and eventually Heathrow Terminal 5), it will almost certainly be necessary to expand the capacity of



the pipelines carrying aviation fuel. In Manchester's case this will probably be from the Ellesmere Port refinery in Merseyside. Watch the local press, and other sources such as the industry news websites—details at the end of this article. Also, with the liberalisation of the European gas market, an 'Interconnector' pipeline is being constructed to connect eastern England with mainland Europe. Onshore, this will almost certainly require expansion of the Bacton gas terminal in North Norfolk.

How can we sustain a campaign on a *proactive* agenda? An interesting new angle has been developed in the campaign against vivisection laboratories Huntingdon Life Sciences [See "Carry on Camping", p54], combining our movement's core skill with the proactive agenda of attacking an existing facility—a camp was set up in the woods just outside the laboratories, and from this base activists talked to workers, and sometimes entered the property. Eventually HLS was forced to evict the camp, which just moved to the other side of the property. I'm not sure how long anyone could psychologically cope with living next door to a refinery, but perhaps it should be considered.

To take the campaign to the industry, we need to look at how and where it operates. The map at the end of this article will hopefully help. The UK has 93 offshore oilfields and 67 offshore gasfields in production, and respectively 21 and 5 under development⁵.

The only really significant onshore field in the UK is BP's Wytch Farm near Poole in Dorset, which accounts for 4.5m of the 5.1m tonnes total annual onshore production⁶. The majority is offshore; however these fields are obviously serviced from land. For a start, there are the seismic ships which carry out the surveys; these rest in port in the Western Isles of Scotland, and on the East coast of Scotland and England. From the websites below or an oil and gas trade journal in a university or other library (City Business Library is good—1 Brewers' Hall Garden, London EC2, near Moorgate tube), you can find out

which areas are being surveyed at a given time. Seismic work tends to occur during the summer, when the weather is favourable. It costs around £10,000 per square kilometre⁷. (An unusual way to disrupt these surveys would be to hack into seismic company computers and change data. How about an office occupation with cybergeeks?! As long as you could show you had visibly achieved this once or twice then, as with tree spiking, you start to cause confusion.

-This idea is pure fantasy and for entertainment purposes only, of course!)

However, development of a well costs £5-10m⁸. Probably the most cost-effective actions would be those that disrupt drilling or platform installation, especially if the work is being

carried out within a time or weather window. Boats might be useful for this kind of action, but there are also things that can be done onshore—such as preventing ships from departing.

In shallow water, such as in Morecambe Bay off Lancashire, two or more connected fixed platforms will be used; in deeper water it will be a larger single fixed rig. Increasing use is also being made of "sub-sea tiebacks" in small and difficult fields; here, much of the production and separation equipment is installed on the seabed at the well-head, and connected by pipelines to the existing

infrastructure. In some cases, and always in deeper water, tethered floating rigs or vessels are employed, connected to the wells by flexible "risers", and oil from these is off-loaded onto tankers which carry it ashore. [This offshore transfer of oil massively increases the likelihood of spills.] Most oil, and all gas, is brought ashore by pipeline, to the terminals shown on the map below.

Rigs are usually constructed in two parts: the base structure (jacket) which stands on the seabed, and the production and accommodation facilities (topsides) which go on top. Some rigs are imported, from Scandinavia, Spain or even the Far East, but there are a number of important shipyards for building and fitting rigs in the UK, as shown on the map.





Although the UK produces more oil than it consumes, over 50% of consumption comes from imports by tanker (and the balance is exported), to bring in different grades of crude. Oil tankers account for almost half of world seaborne trade. In 1992/93, 52% of UK imports came from Norway (some of it by pipeline), and 33% from the Middle East (nearly two thirds of which is from Saudi Arabia)⁹. The main ports for crude oil tankers are Milford Haven in south-west Wales, Ellesmere Port in Merseyside, Sullom Voe in the Shetlands, Grangemouth in the Firth of Forth, Fawley in Southampton and the Thames Estuary in Essex. There are refineries at all of these. On top of this, most other ports in the UK receive refined petroleum products, so at almost every port you will find the characteristic storage tanks.

The UK has 13 oil refineries, which receive their crude by tanker, or by pipeline from a terminal. You can probably arrange a guided tour of a refinery, as a group of students, artists or whatever. Some products from the refinery are transported by road tanker, either direct to garages, or to the distribution depots, which can be found in all major conurbations. Other products are piped away, such as aviation fuel to airports.

When involved in actions at some of the sites above, beware that in many cases there is a complex flow process; disrupting it in the wrong way could lead to an ecological catastrophe. Make sure you know what you are doing! And don't smoke! (Sorry for being patronising).

"Don't try this at home, kids!"

COLOMBIA: Less than a week into 1998, rebels dynamited the nation's main oil pipeline, forcing the suspension of pumping, according to the state-owned oil company Ecopetrol (!). Rebels blew up a portion of the Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline near Arauqita, 230 miles northeast of the capital, Bogota, on January 4th. Ecopetrol said it hoped to resume pumping the following day. The National Liberation Army (ELN), the nation's second largest guerrilla band, was believed responsible. It was the first dynamite attack on the pipeline this year. Rebels sabotaged the oil duct, which normally transports 175,000 barrels of oil a day to the Caribbean coast, 65 times last year. (In total, more than 500 attacks have been recorded on the pipeline in the last decade.) The ELN often targets the oil industry, claiming foreign companies are unfairly exploiting the nation's natural resources (A.P. January 5, 1998).

The companies involved

Shell and BP are the most prominent companies in the UK offshore sector, operating respectively 18 oilfields and 10 gasfields, and 17 oil and 10 gas. Also important are Amerada Hess and Amoco in oil, and ARCO, Mobil and Conoco in gas¹⁰. The UK has 8,400 km of operational offshore oil and gas pipelines¹¹. The British and foreign companies (mainly American, but also Norwegian and others) mostly have head offices in London, while their upstream operating companies are based in Aberdeen, the centre of the UK offshore industry. There are a number of upstream (ie only exploration & production) British companies, such as Enterprise, Premier, LASMO, Monument and Hardy. There is also a large service company sector, which provides 75% of services to the UK sector, and 1% world-wide. These services include geological consultancy, drilling, oilfield process consultancy, pipeline laying, support ships and catering, and also construction and manufacture of equipment, ranging from rigs to drillbits to valves to drilling muds. Some companies work specifically for the offshore oil industry, while others are more general engineering or other companies. There are well over a thousand such companies, the vast majority based in Aberdeen. Details can be obtained from business directories in libraries.

Perhaps we might want to do actions against the smaller companies, as they are more vulnerable. The smaller companies are reported as having inferior safety and environmental practice, and hence are often less popular with workers than the big companies; however the cause of this is probably that while the operating companies benefit from some degree of collusion (most projects are joint ventures, for example), the auxiliary companies are forced to compete for their business, which drives down costs. If the service companies were driven out of business, it would weaken the majors somewhat, but there are philosophical problems with punishing the servant for his master's actions. The real power behind the industry is the majors, the Seven Sisters (although less so than a couple of decades ago—state-owned companies such as Petronas, Petrobras etc are becoming increasingly significant on the world stage, as well as in their own countries). Thus the service companies, though arguably in the *wrong* business, do not embody the most objectionable *way* of doing business (in that they are not in general TNCs).

Perhaps there is a role for a project along the lines of the Armaments Conversion Project, helping companies to do something more socially useful—not very EFi-ish, but probably fundable.



Building alliances

Realistically, even a highly organised guerrilla army is never going to defeat by pure force the industry which is at the centre of the global power structure; look for example at the response to Iraq rocking the boat, Iraq being a country which not only has more weapons than Earth First! but which sits on 10% of the world's oil. We just don't have that kind of clout, and it would be naive to think that we could be any more successful, or that we could do any more than just make companies and governments even more defensive of their position. If we are to have a serious impact on the oil industry, we must be imaginative, and we must be strategic. This means looking for "levers"—groups of people who have more power over the industry than a bunch of young, radical environmentalists. We need to appeal to their particular interests, and inspire and empower them to take effective action. We must go beyond traditional channels of influence (those being: direct to the company, through consumers or through politicians).

One obvious thing on which the industry depends is finance. Who supplies it? The biggest investors are pension funds and insurance companies. Massive claims arising from extreme weather events could put the insurance industry out of business—so why does it invest in the cause of climate change? Exactly this point has been made to insurance companies, by Oxford campaign group Solar Century and by Friends of the Earth. Some creative direct action to further express this could be very well placed. Of the pension funds, perhaps look at those held by groups such as trades unions, teachers or university staff. The list of shareholders can be obtained from the company itself (under sec. 356 of the Companies Act 1985—see Statutes in Force in a library, or Corporate Watch issue 1—the company is obliged to provide this information), or alternatively by a full search on the company (costing £3.50) at Companies House (55 City Road, London EC1 or general enquiries 01222 380 801 for other offices).

Another question on finance is where does it happen? The London Stock Exchange is important, as is the International Petroleum Exchange, and the offices of the fund managers, of the analysts, of the financial consultants who manage share deals. All of these offices can be found out from company annual reports and from business directories in city libraries.

Another possible target group is the future workforce. Where do they come from? Schools, for a start. Presentations or speeches at schools in areas of high oil industry employment could be useful. Targeting careers

MEXICO: On 29th January 1996 thousands of unarmed campesinos blockaded state run Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) oil wells in the oil-rich South Eastern state of Tabasco, Mexico. Ten days later police and troops used clubs and tear gas to disperse them. At one of the blockades in Nacajuca 1,000 police and soldiers violently removed 2,000 and arrested and detained 102. The area is so polluted that in the local lagoons and rivers all the fish have died out, people can no longer bathe or wash clothes and the acid rain is so concentrated it corrodes the tin roofs on the local dwellings. This action was part of a lengthy campaign of direct action demanding compensation for this ecological damage, measures to prevent future contamination and an end to government corruption.

The most recent in this series of actions was on 5th December 1997 when more than 1,000 peasants blocked the entrances of the Ogarrio, Cinco Presidentes and Blasillo oil fields in Tabasco, some 55 miles north of Mexico City. Local farmers and fishermen complain that Pemex has spoiled large swathes of land through continuous leaks from its fields and it has left them unable to produce enough food to live on. Disease is rampant in the area and higher than average rates of infantile leukemia and cancer in adults are reported.

presentations (the milk round) at universities was done in a number of places last term, and can be very effective. There are also employment agencies which specialise in providing oil personnel. In approaching these, the job insecurity in the oil business should be stressed (as well as ethical issues). How long is the industry going to continue (employing people) while the effects of climate change become more profound? How long will workers be kept on while competitive pressures and the rapid advance of technology in the sector force increasing mechanisation? There are now several *unmanned* rigs in the North Sea (which the industry claims as improvements to safety!); meanwhile downstream ever tighter margins have forced massive consolidation and rationalisation. Gulf's Milford Haven refinery is to be closed, as is BP's Llandarcy lubricants plant in North Wales. Shell has recently announced the loss of 3,000 jobs across its European marketing sector (ie forecourts and distribution). Your future in the oil and gas industry? Forget it...

As mentioned earlier, the industry is becoming increasingly technology-driven; therefore research and development is of crucial importance. Much of this is carried out in universities, where it is cheaper, and con-



tact is made with the broader, related research going on in the academic departments. In November 1997 the UK Offshore Operators Association sent a report to member companies encouraging them to increase their involvement in higher education. The key universities are in London (especially Imperial and University Colleges) and in Scotland (Heriot-Watt, Aberdeen, Edinburgh), although there are many others. Geology departments are used to analyse exploration data, while Engineering, Chemistry and other departments develop the structures and the processes for extraction and production. Activists at Imperial College have just begun an excellent campaign getting students to challenge the conflict of interests of their Rector, Sir Ronald Oxburgh, who is also a non-executive director of Shell. The campaign to chuck out oil will be expanding to other universities soon (contact Corporate Watch).

Another very important interest group is the workers. Certainly, they have been heavily exploited by the companies in the UK. BP switched all its personnel onto "single staff" status between 1993 and 1995, meaning that unions could only negotiate on health and safety issues; pay and conditions are up to individuals to resolve themselves without support. This was achieved by a series of financial inducements and psychological pressure. In Shell Exploration & Production there has never been any collective bargaining, except on grievances and disciplinary procedures. In 1993, Shell made all 400 maintenance staff at the Shell Haven refinery in Essex redundant, and asked them to re-apply for their jobs on the basis of no union recognition; the company refused to meet the T&G union. Tanker drivers from Shell Haven are paid for a standard delivery time, regardless of the actual time it takes—for example, the trip to London and back is paid for three hours' work, whatever the time of day, even though in rush hour the journey takes at least five hours¹².

However, it is difficult to know how we can really work with the workforce in an industry that we want to see the end of. Yes, we share a common enemy, but what do we want the workers to do? What do they want us to do? The author would appreciate any ideas on this. The most radical of the offshore unions is the Offshore Industries Liaison Committee (OILC), which is open in its distrust and criticism of the companies. Its main campaign area is safety, although it is naturally pissed off about workforce downsizing and union de-recognition. Last year OILC paid for Freddy Pulecio of the Colombian Union Sindical Obrero to tour Europe and describe his disturbing experiences of BP and the Colombian military.

There are other groups we should be encouraging to take direct action—such as fishermen or those whose livelihoods depend on the tourist industry. In May 1997, fourteen fishing boats blockaded Sullom Voe port in the Shetlands, delaying two supertankers for 24 hours. This was in protest at the damage to their catches of razor clams (and the lack of compensation) arising from the Braer disaster.

It is through such alliances that we can start to really challenge the grip of the oil industry. There are more people who've had enough of oil than you'd think.

Contacts:

100 Days to Kyoto, c/o Box CW, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RQ, 100days@waveland.org - The network which facilitated almost 100 actions in the run-up to Kyoto. 100 days can help particular EF! groups organise actions, by sending someone with knowledge of oil infrastructure etc. Contact 100 Days Consultancy Services Inc.

Action Globale Contre l'Industrie Petroliere, c/o Greenpeace, 7 Boulevard Carl Vogt, 1205 Geneve, Switzerland, tel. 0041 22 329 1351, fax 0041 22 320 4567 vargas2@uni2a.unige.ch - International activist network (some of them speak English!).

Offshore Industries Liaison Committee, 6 Trinity Street, Aberdeen AB11 5LY, 01224 210 118 - The most radical offshore union.

Solar Century, 32 St Bernard's Road, Oxford OX2 6EH, 01865 513 534, www.solarcentury.co.uk - Working with insurance companies.

Greenpeace UK Oil Team, Canonbury Villas, Islington, London N1 2PN, 0171 865 8100, www.greenpeace.org.uk

Friends of the Earth UK Energy Team, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ, 0171 490 1555, www.foe.org.uk

Cardigan Bay EF!, Temperance House, Taliesin, Powys, Mid Wales, ecollective@hotmail.com

Useful websites:

www.offshore-technology.com - Guide to worldwide oil and gas fields, including detailed diagrams, plus information on the (service and operating) companies responsible for each part.

www.petroleum.co.uk - Institute of Petroleum site, including news (eg contracts) and lots of other useful information.

www.petrodata.co.uk - All kinds of useful information about oil.

www.slb.com/80/petr.dir/guthery.html#Pointers - A site of links to just about anything else you could need.



References

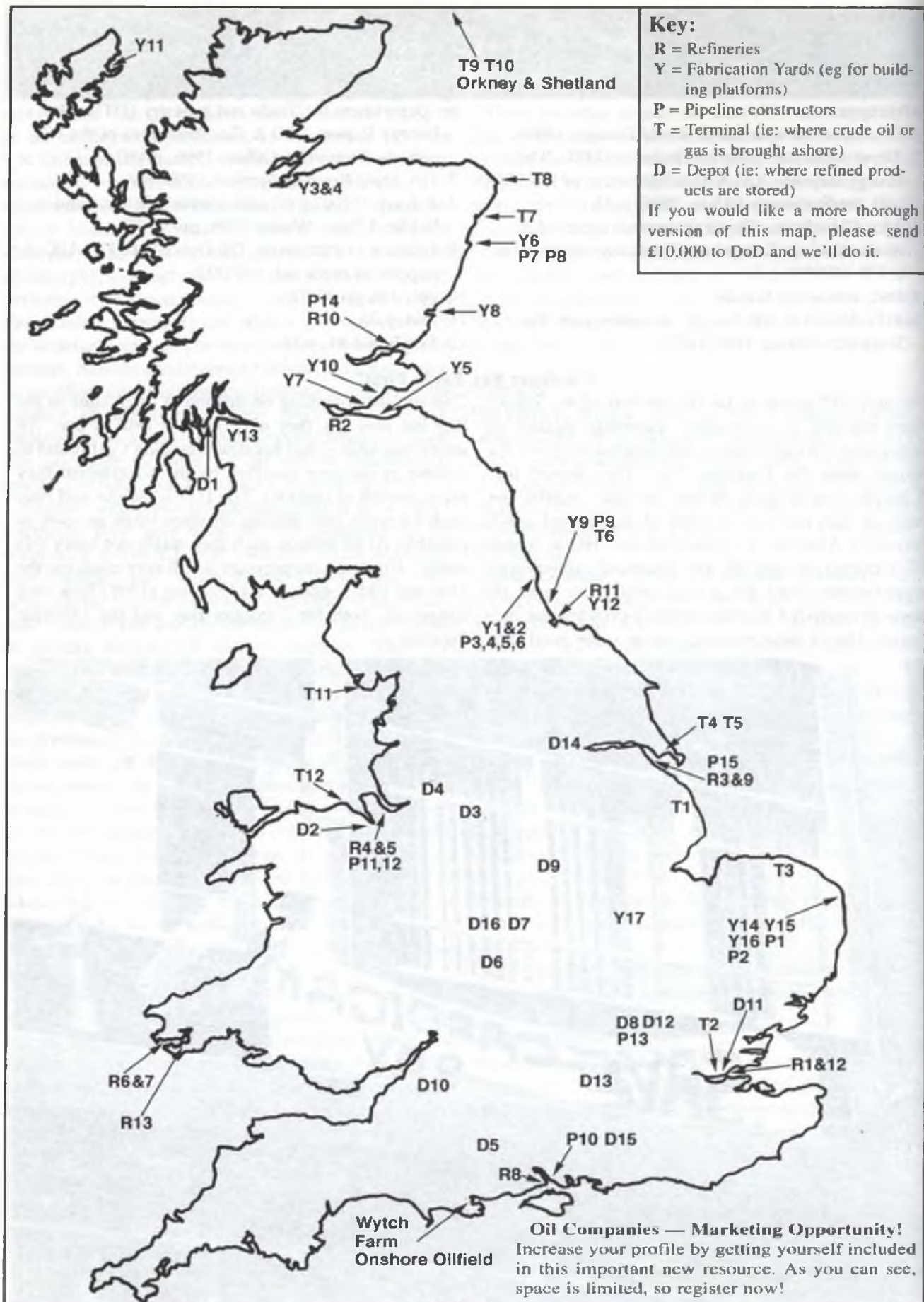
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- 2: Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), The Energy Report - Oil & Gas Resources of the UK, pub. the Stationery Office, 1996, p.15
- 3: Meg Chesshyre, 'On target to peak again - UK production', in European oil industry supplement to FT, 10/9/97, p.ii
- 4: *ibid*, and *op cit* 6, p.74
- 5: DTI, Digest of UK Energy Statistics, pub. the Stationery Office, 1997, p.75
- 6: Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), The Energy Report—Oil & Gas Resources of the UK, pub. the Stationery Office, 1996, p.180
- 7: Oil, Shell Briefing Service, 1990, p.9
- 8: P King, 'Mixing oil and science', Science and Public Affairs, Winter 1996, pp.34-37
- 9: Institute of Petroleum, Oil Data Sheet 12—UK imports of crude oil, 1992/93
- 10: *op cit* 6, pp.76-79
- 11: *ibid*, p.75
- 12: See Ignite #1, p.16

Cardigan Bay Earth First!

The only EF! group so far (to the best of my knowledge) engaged in a sustained campaign against oil exploration—which in their case means Chevron's disastrous plans for Cardigan Bay. They report that: "Chevron has delayed drilling for one, maybe two years, at least partly as a result of unexpected public interest(!). After our occupation of their HQ in August '97 Chevron invited all the interested conservation organisations round for a chat (who were over the moon, previously Chevron wouldn't even answer their letters). Out of these meetings came some good info.

Chevron was planning on drilling at three sites in the Bay but now say they only want to drill at one. An interesting spin is that because they didn't get round to drilling in the time specified by the government they are in breach of contract. The DTI is furious and may push Chevron into drilling all three wells as soon as possible. At £3 million each they might not fancy this much." However, the pressure is still very much on: the 18th and 19th rounds of oil licensing (1998) look very dangerous, both for Cardigan Bay and the 'Atlantic Frontier'.





Refineries (figures in brackets refer to millions of tonnes per annum production):

- R1: BP - Coryton Refinery, The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex (8.8)
R2: BP - Grangemouth, Stirlingshire, Tel: 01324 483422 (8.9)
R3: Conoco - Eastfield Rd, South Killingholme, Immingham, Grimsby, DN40 (7.6)
R4: Eastham Refinery Ltd. - North Rd, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral (1.0)
R5: Shell - Stanlow Manufacturing Complex, Oil Sites Rd, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65 (12.5)
R6: Elf - Milford Haven, Tel: 01646 690300 (5.3)
R7: Gulf - Waterston, Milford Haven, Tel: 01646 692461 (5.4)
R8: Esso - Fawley, Southampton, Tel: 01703 892 511 (15.0)
R9: Lindsey Oil Refinery Ltd. - Eastfield Rd, North Killingholme, DN40 (9.4)
R10: Nynas UK AB, East Camperdown St., Dundee, DD1 (0.7)
R11: Phillips Imperial Petroleum Ltd. - Wilton, Middlesbrough, Tel: 01642 454 144 (5.0)
R12: Shell - Haven Refinery, The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex (4.3)
R13: Texaco - Pembroke SA71, Tel: 01646 641 334 (9.1)

Fabrication Yards:

- Y1: Aker McNulty - South Shields, Tyne-and-Wear
Y2: Amec Process & Energy - Amec House, Amec Way, Hadrian Rd, Wallsend, Tyne-and-Wear, NE28
Y3: BARMAC - Ardersier, Tel: 01667 463 000
Y4: BARMAC - Nigg, Moray Firth, Tel: (same as Y3)
Y5: Brown Brothers - Rosebank Works, Broughton Rd, Edinburgh, EH7
Y6: Consafe Engineering - Consafe Centre, Greenwell Rd, East Tullos Industrial Estate, Aberdeen AB12
Y7: Consafe, Seaforth Place, West Shore, Burntisland, Fife KY3
Y8: Consafe Fabrications - Sea Oil Base, Ferryden, Montrose, Angus, DD10
Y9: Heerema - Greenland Rd, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS24
Y10: Kvaerner Oil & Gas - Methil Yard, Wellesley Rd., Buckhaven, Leven, Fife KY8
Y11: Lewis Offshore, Arnish Point, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
Y12: SLP Engineering - Commercial St, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS2
Y13: UiE - Cart St, Clydebank, Dumbartonshire G81
Y14: Amec Process & Energy - Edison Way, Gapton Hall Industrial Estate, Great Yarmouth NR31
Y15: Atlantic Power & Gas - James Watt Close, Harfrey's Industrial Estate, Great Yarmouth NR31
Y16: Grootcon, High Rd., Gorleston, Great Yarmouth NR31
Y17: Marshall Marlow - Unit 31, Merlin Business Park, Coningsby Rd, Bretton, Peterborough PE3

Pipeline Constructors:

- P1: Amec Process & Energy - Edison Way, Gapton Hall Industrial Estate, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31
P2: S.T. Marine - Unit 1, Fenner Business Centre, Salmon Rd, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30.
P3: Steels Engineering - Leechmere Works, Leechmere Industrial Estate, Sunderland, Tyne-and-Wear, SR2.
P4: AHL Industrial Pipework Specialists - Unit 22, Royal Industrial Estate, Blackett St, Jarrow, Tyne-and-Wear NE32.
P5: Marine Engineering Pipeworks - Leechmere Industrial Estate, Toll Bar Rd, Grangetown, Sunderland, SR2.
P6: As P5.
P7: Enterprise Engineering Services Ltd - Craigshaw Drive,

West Tullos Industrial Estate, Aberdeen AB12.

- P8: A&B Welding Services - Unit 1A, Woodside Rd, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB23.
P9: Heerema - Greenland Rd, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS24.
P10: MTB Engineering Services - 23 Satchell Lane, Hamble, Southampton SO31.
P11: McAlpine Alfred Services & Pipelines - Cambridge Rd, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65.
P12: Smit Land & Marine Engineering - Port Causeway, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside L62.
P13: BPA - Lord Alexander House, Waterhouse St, Hemel Hempstead, HP1.
P14: Riverside Engineering Services - Unit 5, East Dock St, Dundee DD1
P15: Stephenson & Heron - Scandinavian Way, Stallingborough, Grimsby, DN37.

Terminals:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| T1: Theddlethorpe. | T7: Cruden Bay |
| T2: Purfleet. | T8: St. Fergus |
| T3: Bacton | T9: Flotta |
| T4: Dimlington | T10: Sullom Voe |
| T5: Easington | T11: Barrow |
| T6: Seal Sands | T12: Point of Ayr |

Depots:

- D1: BP - Depot, Victoria Rd., Dunoon PA23
D2: BP - Dalmeny Installation, Dalmerly, S. Queensferry CH30
D3: Conaco - Bramhall Oil Terminal, Chester Rd., Poynton, Stockport SK12
D4: Elf - Cadishead Terminal, Liverpool Rd., Cadishead, Manchester M44
D5: Esso - Fuel Depot, Wilton Rd, Quidhampton, Salisbury SP2
D6: Esso - Birmingham Terminal, Bromford Lane, Erdington B24
D7: Texaco - Midland Oil Terminal, Trinity Rd, Kingbury, Tamworth
D8: Texaco - Buncefield Terminal, Green Lane, Hemel Hempstead HP2
D9: Texaco, Total, Esso - Colwick Industrial Estate, Private Rd., Number 3, Colwick, Nottingham NG4
D10: Shell Mex & BP - Berwick Lane, Hallen, Bristol BS10
D11: Shell Mex & BP - Oliver Rd., Grays, Essex
D12: Shell Mex & BP - Vaughan Rd., Harpenden, Herts.
D13: Shell Mex & BP - Padworth Lane, Lower Padworth, Reading RG7
D14: Shell Mex & BP - Paper Mill Rd., Rawcliffe Bridge, Goole DN14
D15: Shell, BP - Hamble Lane, Hamble, Southampton, SO31
D16: Shell, BP - Piccadilly Way, Kinsbury, Tamworth B78

Notes:

Bear in mind that London has all the corporate headquarters, as well as the International Petroleum Exchange, and Shell's International Trading and Shipping (Orchard Place, E14.). Most importantly, remember that this list, and the information contained in it, is by no means complete—for instance, there are many more depots than are listed here, and practically all ports have depots. Depots can be very good for actions as a distribution network can be easily disrupted—but there are different types, eg. some are for distribution for petrol stations, some for lubricants, others for heating oil etc. And some of these will be better for actions than others (in terms of disruption caused.) So—research everything further, this is just intended as a starting point!



World Wide Fraud

Pandering to the Demands of Industry



These Batak people of Palawan are being forced from their homes into settlements by WWF

All around the world, as you read this, children of other cultures are being kidnapped and forced into schools against their will and that of their tribes. People from Indonesia to Zaire are being forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands into shoddy shanty towns with poor sanitation and bad food. These people want to stay in their homelands, living as they always have; with no leaders and no civilisation; hunting and gathering.

But the land they live on contains rich minerals and trees. The greedy eyes of westerners want it, so they take it. A familiar story? Corporate aggression? Despotism? Missionaries? Martian invaders? Yes, all these things (well, maybe not martians), but one other thing that may surprise many people: the World wide Fund for Nature, which is instrumental in these invasions the world over. Behind the nice caring fluffy panda logo lies a nasty evil empire that would make Ghengis Khan look like a local mafia hood.

The WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) with its Panda bear logo is well known. It was created some 25

years ago. Trophy hunters like Prince Bernhard from the Netherlands, top managers in industry and the money business and top politicians saw that one of their most beloved trophies, the tiger, had been chased to the edge of extinction.

This dilemma for the trophy hunters and the need for a good reputation as conservationists brought one hundred of the biggest multinationals to the decision to donate one million US Dollars each (of course under attractive tax exemptions). WWF was born with this 100 million Dollar stock. Prince Bernhard became the first WWF President, now followed by trophy hunter Prince Phillip from England.

Since the beginning of its work the WWF has received much appreciation from all governments on earth. It even acts in many nations as a de facto ministry for the environment. For good reasons:

1. WWF is able to polish up the governments' good environmental image.
2. WWF helps to protect very small areas as nature reserves and therefore gives space for the indiscrimi-



nate destruction of huge remaining areas, by industry and small scale land grabbers. Their bluster about 'illegal' logging is merely a smoke screen to cover up the 95% of logging that is legal.

3. WWF helps to develop remote places with large areas of intact nature and get control over it.
4. As these remote areas are generally tribal lands of non-assimilated peoples WWF assists governments to get control over them and to assimilate them into the mainstream.
5. WWF promotes a very profitable tourism industry.

As a result of all this, the losers are savage peoples and—it may look paradoxical at first glance—wild nature in general due to the sacrifice of most of the land. As usual, the winner is the wealthy world.

The oppression of savage tribal peoples done by nature conservationists has never been a focus of discussion. Results of nature conservation activities have always been spin doctored to imply that the damages done to the savages were properly redressed. Shanty towns and coca-cola are no replacement for a three million year old culture. The point here is that compensation is irrelevant anyway, since these people should not be forcibly removed in the first place. The argument about compensation is a red herring to divert attention from the genocide being conducted by NGOs who pretend to support human rights.

In Zaire the Barhwa Pygmies were driven out of their ancestral land in order to establish the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. WWF has been deeply involved. The victims formerly lived, in dignity, in their traditional ways but are now exposed to alcoholism, prostitution, extreme poverty and exploitation by the neighbouring Bantu people. Likewise Bambuti Pygmies were driven out of the Maiko National Park as result of joint Government and WWF activities.

Similarly in Central Africa, the Dzangha-Sangha Project which has been directed by WWF since 1988, has resulted in the destruction of the livelihood and loss of dignity of the Baka Pygmies in this area and in the loss of their ancestral homeland.

In Rwanda the Batwa Pygmies were driven out of the Nyungwe Natural Forest in 1994 to make way for a Nature Conservation Site. WWF was involved in the creation of this area and as a result the Batwa of Rwanda have lost their ancestral land and last refuge.

In Kenya the Tsavo East National Park has been established and is managed with the help of WWF, on the Sanye ancestral land. The Sanye have been severely prosecuted as poachers on their own land. As a result the Sanye peoples have been virtually destroyed as a society of hunters and gatherers.

In Namibia the Hai'om Bushmen have been driven out of their ancestral land, the Etosha Pan, which WWF is involved in securing as a conservation area!

In consultation with WWF the Government of Botswana declared, at the Xane kotla meeting in February 1996, that the 3000 last remaining Bushmen, in broadly traditional hunting and gathering lifestyles, have to leave their ancestral land and their traditional lives. The reason being that their ancestral land is now proposed as a new game reserve.

In South Africa the 40 last remaining Bushmen have been chased out of their ancestral land which is now largely used as the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. WWF has been and still is involved. Furthermore they continue to discount the land claims of the evacuated Bushmen.

In India the Gujjar nomads in Uttar Pradesh are victims of a Nature Conservation Project, where WWF is directly involved. Also the last few aborigine peoples, belonging to the Negrito race, have been victimised by National Park projects in the Nilgiri mountains where WWF was and still is active.



Armed Indians block a railway leading to a gold mine on their territory



In the Philippines the Haribon Foundation acts with WWF as a partner and receives considerable financial support from them. In 1988 the Haribon Foundation tried to chase the Batak, aborigines of Palawan island, out of their forested ancestral land all around Mount Puyos (Cleopatra's Needle) to make space for an extension to the Mount Saint Paul's National Park. The Batak were supposed to be resettled on a denuded area to help in tree plantations, commonly termed as reforestation projects. FPCN (see below) was able to put a stop to that plan, but the Haribon Foundation continued, using WWF money, to 'develop' the Batak. The money was raised mainly in the "debt-for-nature swap" business.

This resulted in a more or less forced settlement of the formerly free moving Batak and with this an almost complete loss of their culture and traditions. IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature—the umbrella organisation of which WWF is a part) is presently carrying out a study on the impact of the Batak on the remaining natural forest, regardless of the fact that thousands of Filipinos intruded on the Batak's ancestral land, making meaningful analysis unfeasible.

In Malaysia the Mannee, the very last aborigines still holding on to their traditional lifestyle, have lost access to half of their ancestral ground in the Banthat range due to a National Park project on Mannee tribal land, for which WWF is largely responsible. The remaining land is open to loggers, farmers and settlers.

WWF planned to evacuate the Papuan people from the area of the Lorentz National Park in Indonesian-occupied West Papua. WWF is in partnership with the Indonesian Government and the destructive American intruders holding the Freeport mine and is responsible for the killing of at least seven OPM (Organisation for a Free Papua) freedom fighters, who were killed during the rescue of WWF staff taken as hostages last year. Still though, WWF does not recognize OPM interests and land claims.

There are many more cases of small peoples victimised by joint Governmental and WWF 'nature conservation' activities and policy. As with most other conservation programs, this is a front for corporate expansion and destruction. These peoples have very few friends on Earth. Friends of Peoples Close to Nature, a non-hierarchical network, exists to rectify this situation, both by direct action and by political lobbying. If the process of civilisation and globalisation is allowed to wipe out the last remaining non-western cultures, we will be left with a human monoculture. If biodiversity is important, then human diversity is too.

We must make alliances with and give support to these last bastions of hope for the future of humanity.

Whilst we in the 'first' world are trying to get our land back, these people still have it. They live as they have always done. As they die, our dreams die with them. Without them, the future of humanity is sealed in its present course, all alternative futures will be gone and the aberration of ten thousand years ago in Mesopotamia (see agriculture article in this issue) will have parasitised the whole planet. We need people to get involved. Not to be told what to do, or to buy t-shirts, but to actively join in the resistance of wild peoples around the world by attacking the heart of the problem right here in the 'rich' world. There can be no social justice within a culture that commits genocide on its neighbours.

Some of these peoples now number only a few hundred, in a couple of years they will be gone for ever, and part of our own humanity will be gone with them—unless we act decisively now. For more information and to find out what you can do to help, send an SAE to FPCN England & International Office, 50 Hillside Crescent, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 7LT, ENGLAND, Tel/Fax: +44-(0) 1257-230218





Hills not Holes!

Quarry Fighting in the South-West



The campaign against quarrying in the South West is the longest ongoing direct action campaign in Britain. Actions against the expansion of Whatley Quarry in the Mendip hills have been happening from early '92 and have continued sporadically ever since. Two of the biggest campaigns in the last year have been against the south west being turned into a cratered landscape. The Dead Woman's Bottom camps were set up to stop the construction of a service road for the Whatley and Mier Head Quarries, while direct action secured a reprieve for important ecology near Newton Abbott—due to be blasted to mine for toilets! The campaign to save Ashton Court in Bristol from quarrying has seen actions for over two years and a camp was set up in the last couple of weeks. This article is a rough sketch of what's going on.

Whatley Quarry & Dead Woman's Bottom

Whatley Quarry is huge, huge beyond description. Standing at the edge the vast dumper trucks look like tonka toys and your heart aches with the pain inflicted upon the earth. Over a dozen actions have been held at Whatley Quarry in Somerset, since spring 1992. Most of the early entrance blockades were only staffed by between 12 and 30 activists.¹ The joy of seeing thirty trucks backed up along the road as we sat locked onto the entrance gates always compensated for the fact that it was fucking freezing and somewhere around seven in the morning.

Numbers steadily grew until we could expect around fifty people—a momentous amount at the time. Over the years dozens got arrested, offices were occupied, druids cursed at policemen and activists narrowly avoided getting blown up when they invaded the quarry (purposefully) during exploding. On one occasion a blockade lasted for hours without the police noticing that the gate was not locked up but merely tied together with a shoe lace!

In a victory for direct action in May '94 the Secretary of the State rejected ARC's plans to expand Whatley Quarry. This victory turned out to be all too temporary, within a year ARC had applied once again to expand



their quarry by 85 acres. It was this that encouraged people to organise a large national action at Whatley.

The action on Monday December the 4th '95 was an even greater success than expected. The aim of the action was to highlight the destruction of the Mendip Hills and the quarry's proposed expansion. A week later the owners hadn't managed to restart work.

At 5.30 am, four hundred activists descended on the quarry. Small teams ensured gates were blockaded and all plant and machinery was occupied. Most groups were fully prepared due to workshops held the previous day, at a camp several miles from Whatley. Detailed maps and a predetermined plan ensured police and security were outmanoeuvred. Tripods were carried more than nine miles over night and set-up on the quarry's rail line whilst lorries were turned away. Drummers, colourful costumes and bagpipes kept spirits high.

By midday police sent security to drag down a large group that had occupied a spoil heap. 50 were arrested—until police vans were full. Scuffles broke out as people blocked the vans. One protesters leg was run over. It was badly bruised, not broken as first thought.

Others ensured ARC paid a more realistic price for Mendip stone (presently sold at between £2 and £3/tonne). Press reports stated that £250,000 worth of damage was caused. This excludes the cost of one weeks lost production, for a quarry normally selling eleven thousand tonnes per day!

Twenty metres of railway track leading out of the quarry 'disappeared'; the control panel for video monitoring of the plant fell apart; a two storey crane pulled itself to bits; three control rooms dismantled themselves; and several diggers and conveyor belts 'broke down'.

Sixty four were arrested, filling every nearby police station. Most of the arrests were for aggravated trespass and a considerable amount of cases were later dropped.

The action inspired everyone who went on it and really gave us a feeling of collective strength. Coming a month before the Newbury evictions kicked off it contributed significantly to the feeling of militancy and possibility that characterised that campaign.

Actions have happened occasionally ever since then but never yet again on such a scale. In summer last year attention and action was once again brought back to the Mendips when the Dead Woman's Bottom campaign set up camp a few miles from Whatley Quarry. The following is taken from a short interview with someone who took part in the defence of Dead Woman's Bottom in January this year.

The Clearance and Eviction of Dead Woman's Bottom



Could you give a background to the campaign?

The quarrying conglomerates that already dominate the Mendips are working hand in glove with the local council to build infrastructure that will allow them to expand. At Dead Woman's Bottom they are widening a single track lane into a three and half mile dual carriageway mainly to service quarries in the immediate area—primarily Whatley, run by ARC, and Mier Head, run by Foster Yeoman. This is flattening a beautiful valley covered mainly with woodland and regenerating ex-quarry land. Asham Woods which has now been decimated is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and it contains/contained 10% of the country's remaining horseshoe bats. The project brings them even closer to extinction. The camps were set up last summer and became a real focus for people fighting quarrying all over the Mendips.

What happened at the eviction?

The bailiffs came in at 7am on the 20th of January, completely unannounced. There were children as young as two on site. This was unlike any other eviction because though its normal to be hit by surprise, until now the state have waited until they've gone through the normal possession hearings etc. in court. If your site hasn't gone through court then its reasonable to presume that you have some time to prepare. The state knew this and understood that hitting a site which had not fully developed and that was not on eviction alert would be a lot easier. They used emergency powers issued during the second world war that gave them the power to evict without prior notification or the normal court proceedings.

The police, bailiffs and climbers marched in and cordoned off the site. In their wake came the diggers and chainsaw gangs who swept across the route trashing any land or trees not occupied. Bailiffs tore down the benders and cleared the ground of people. The



climbers, the same ones as always, Richard Turner's scabs from Sheffield, then set to work in the trees. The struggle in the trees continued for three days with activists and state climbers chasing each other around the branches.

Meanwhile on the ground, half way through the first day people started arriving from other places. When people were thrown off the site they were just invading the cordon again and if you were caught a second time you were nicked.

Bailiffs were drawing out white lines to mark the area they were taking control of. According to them our firepit was a yard inside the cordon. So the bailiffs came over while we were having breakfast and just circled us saying "Right boys, get them". We scarpered—three people got arrested. They then started to redraw the white line, and we realised the firepit had been outside the cordon all the time.

By the time I got there, which was quite late on, there were about 50 people. With the element of utter surprise, and hugely outnumbering an unprepared camp the Sheriff had expected the eviction to be over by the end of the first day. However it went on till the weekend. They were quite shocked, new camps were set up off route on land that belonged to farmers who were

against the road. Lots of fencing was trashed and though people couldn't stop the eviction they were making the running of the eviction very difficult. A couple of dozen got arrested and were bailed away from the site. Some were having to sign on daily at the police station. Police vans and landrovers were parked at all approaching roads watching numbers & keeping a look out for bailed activists who were trying to sneak back into the exclusion zone.

How well did the network of treehouses, tunnels and lockons stand up?

Not very well—but they held up. There were five camps on route. If everyone wasn't there they could have bulldozed it in well under a day but the lock-ons lasted for about two hours each. Tree defence held up for about three days, but most of the trees were quite small—apart from at one camp, Castle Hill, which held up the longest. It was more a case of running around—cat and mouse trying to keep the eviction going. The tunnels were incomplete and not very defensible. The climbers were cutting walkways, but walkways were being put up again in the evening. When I left there were about 15-20 activists in a couple of camps set up outside the cordon. They were all intent on sabbing the place—a lot of action was being done in the evening.

Ashton Court!

In early March this year a camp was set up at Ashton Court in Bristol to stop its imminent destruction by the Australian mining multinational Pioneer. Pioneer intend to expand into the ecologically important Top Park Field, a wildflower meadow, and translocate the topsoil to a rye grass filled field nearby. Translocation of topsoil has been tried before and has failed consistently.

Actions over the last two years have ranged from illegal marches, which brought Bristol town centre to a standstill, to regular blockades at the site. In August last year a tripod blocked the entrance at 6am while activists covered conveyor belts inside. In September the security thought they would outwit protesters by parking their landrover in the entrance so we could not put up a tripod. Five people just locked on beneath the landrover instead and it took six hours to remove them. The site could not then commence work anyway as pixies had trashed the machines the night



before. November saw a mass trespass and cricket game in the quarry. A blockade followed the next day while simultaneously activists blockaded the entrance to Pioneer's St. Phillips Marsh site. On top of this those dastardly pixies were out again causing havoc. In December activists travelled to London to pay a visit to Pioneer Aggregate's Head Office. They managed to occupy the boardroom and hassle the Managing Director no end.

Everyone is welcome and needed at the camp so Tel. 0117 9420129 or 0117 9393093 for directions and come down and take part in the resistance! If you can't come down do a solidarity action at your nearest Pioneer Site—we'll tell you where they are.





Why do you think so few came to the eviction?

It wasn't very well networked, largely because no-one was on eviction standby on site or around the country. There was no contact number you could phone for the first couple of days. Site mobile numbers were not publicised around the country. There was no national phone tree—so those who knew it was going on were, quite literally, the 'usual suspects': who had been keeping in touch through friendship networks. It was a premature eviction, which was not fully prepared for. Richard Turner (chief state climber) said that this was a tactic they intend to use in the future. Other campaigns have to learn from Dead Woman's Bottom and set up good national phone trees etc. from the very start.

What do you think the campaign achieved?

For a start the eviction must have cost them tens of thousands. The last big action in the Mendips was two years ago but the eviction showed that anti-quarry campaigns are still going on. It reminded everyone that the industrial monster is munching away at the Mendips—and needs to be stopped. Dead Woman's Bottom and the Teigngrace campaign have highlighted the fact that we're not stuck on road protesting or single issues. It doesn't matter what's bulldozing and chainsawing the land, wherever nature and the wild is under attack we'll resist and throw a spanner in the cogs of the machine.

What do you think the future of the campaign is?

Many were adamant that they would stay. It's a road linking quarries together, the list of potential offensive targets is almost limitless. The cops were going 'Why

aren't you leaving—it's all over' and people replied 'it's not over—this is just the beginning.' Some of the best anti-road campaigns have been most effective after the trees come down, because that's when the cranes go up. The expensive machinery moves in and the workers come in who have to be paid whether they're working, or the site is occupied. People are going to dig their heels in because it was a really beautiful place, that lots of people feel really linked to and part of.

Solidarity actions are really needed—ARC & Foster Yeoman offices, quarries and depots should be especially targeted. Campaigners are going to stay in the Mendips, other sites are coming up. Whatley Quarry is due to be expanded, so is Mier Head Quarry, two of some of the biggest quarries in Europe. The direct action has gone on for 6 years now in the Mendips and people will still be resisting in another six years.

Campaign Update

As of mid March all of the thirty arrested have had their cases dropped, and many have started suing the police for wrongful arrest. Campaign solicitors are looking into the legality of the eviction and the cases being dropped is a good sign that the sheriff and police are worried. A camp is still in existence off route and there has been a bit of post eviction bulldozer diving. An info line is updated regularly so Tel. 01749 880144 and get down there!

(1) See issues 1-4 of DoD as well as many of the last six years of EF! AU' s for details of these actions.

Victory at Teigngrace

On July 17, 1997, protesters occupied a site at Teigngrace, South Devon, that was under threat from ball clay quarry giant Watts, Blake and Bearne (WBB). The expansion scheme involved the destruction of 120 acres of flood meadow and the re-routing of a mile length of two rivers, the Teign and Bovey. The ball clay would then be extracted, exported and used in the manufacture of toilets, washbasins and tiles.

Unlike the majority of other development schemes that have been opposed, no Public Inquiry had ever been held when the site was occupied. The scheme was set to go ahead after approval by Devon County Council, despite opposition by the vast majority of local residents, the Environment Agency, English Nature and many others. Approval was given without the consent of any of the governmental advisory bodies for the environment, thus making them purposeless. This is a common occurrence in an inadequate



The most amazing aspect of Teigngrace was local involvement. Above, a class of secondary school children are given an introduction to campaigning. Pictured also is the 'mobile office project' van with phones, computers and files. With the office on site the division between camp and office is broken down.



Despite two weeks' notice, the Department refused the weary campaigners' request to see a minister. Under a heavy police presence, a civil servant was sent out to meet them. Many of the lifelong law-abiding villagers were furious and willing to storm the building, but after much debate the letter was presented.

The next day, activists outraged at the Ministry's arrogance returned to the building and dropped a banner from a canopy above the doors to once again highlight the issue.

This seemed to be the final straw for the Government, and two days later, on October 14, the scheme was called in. The months of what had essentially been a PR war with a multi-nation-

al company had paid off. planning system where applications are often approved simply to save money. If a development is refused permission, a costly Public Inquiry will automatically be held on appeal. Companies can also legally bribe Councils through 'planning gain', meaning they make investments into the infrastructure to compensate for any damage done.

The scale of local opposition soon became apparent when a hastily thrown together route walk was held, with an expected turnout of 100 people. On the day, over 1000 people came to show their support for the protesters.

Campaigners under the banner of Anti-Quarry Action (AQUA), a coalition of villagers and activists, demanded that John Prescott [the Environment Minister] call the scheme in for a Public Inquiry. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) put the scheme on hold pending its decision. After much debate, it was decided that the camps would be taken down should an Inquiry be held.

Work on the site was oriented towards informing the public rather than preparing for an eviction. Every day villagers and activists were out on the streets of local towns leafleting and getting pro-forma letters to Prescott signed. The lack of a 'doomed to get evicted' feeling on site helped keep up morale, and the presence of the mobile office as a part of the site rather than a separate entity kept people informed from day to day.

It was a very pro-active campaign, with a rally held in a nearby town and a walk from Devon to London taking 12 days to cover 242 miles. The walkers were met in London by other campaigners who went to the DETR to hand a letter to Prescott.

al company had paid off.

Protesters kept their word and took the camps down. Some stayed on to fight the Public Inquiry, which is yet to be held.

Time will tell if this was a wise course of action, leaving the fate of a beautiful and ecologically important area in the hands of a system that has failed so many times. It was only through the actions of the campaign that the system was forced to work for us, and without the use of direct action it would have failed those it is meant to represent.

If the Public Inquiry is won, it will be a victory for the rivers Teign and Bovey, the creatures that live within them, and the villagers who live nearby, but it does not mean the so-called democratic planning process that has approved so many environmentally damaging schemes works. If it is lost, it will only prove that the system is seriously flawed. Either way, it is a victory for direct action.





We can run our own lives and make every day a holiday.

Kids against school.

Viva Sasé

Tierra y Libertad



Morning meeting in Sasé

Trekking up to reach Sasé, one follows a meandering trail of hard stony earth, tracing its way through clusters of trees as it twists up the side of the sheer valley. The spindly dry stone walls that occasionally still deign to accompany this fickle path anticipate the rugged but impressive beauty of the village itself, whose robust buildings conceal intricate interiors laced with ancient wooden beams. Though the rubble of some of the less enduring buildings dusts the ground around those that remain, and the haunting taste of desertion lingers where wildflowers usurp the pathways, the village as a whole stands on in the face of years of neglect. And now chickens scurry and cluck around the base of the high church tower, which points up to the stoic mountains whose vast peaks overlook the settlement.

Sasé was just one of hundreds of abandoned villages in the Aragonese Pyrenees till it was occupied two years ago by the 'Colours Collective'. The villages were abandoned in the '50s and '60s due to the lure of the city and the pressure of cattlemen and right-wing landlords. Now it's owned by the local government Diputacion de Aragon (DGA). Sasé is mostly in ruins after 30 years of abandonment. It has extensive terracing closely planted, along with most of the mountains, with a monoculture of small red pines. It also has lots of fruit trees, village gardens of rich dark earth, a river, huge oak woods, etc.

The Colours Collective, who specialise in artisan products, traditional music, circus acts and organic agriculture, had experience of living in Primout, an occupied village in Leon, and then in various camps, before occupying Sasé, with their children and animals in 1995, with a project of reconstruction in harmony with the environment. Sasé is a steep 6km climb from the nearest road, or a 15km drive by landrover up a forest track open only in summer. The village is 1300 metres above sea level.

With most of the villages deserted (many for reservoir schemes) this part of the Pyrenees is dominated by

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tourism, cattlemen, barracks of military police and a big centre of Opus Dei. The DGA never seriously negotiated. In 1996 the Sasé villagers were lured down to a pathetic temporary camp, with the promise of a legalised village, but the unofficial suggestions of the DGA were totally impossible (no water, already full etc) and Sasé, never totally abandoned, was re-occupied.

In the summer of 1997, Sasé received a new order and date for eviction, but by this time they had found friends, notably from the resistance network set up by the Zapatista Rebellion of the indigenous people of Chiapas in Mexico. Hundreds of people visited Sasé, eager to help the families there, and much progress was made, rehabilitating the bakery, school and extending the organic gardens. Living in Sasé is hard work, there is no electricity, gas or shops, but the forty inhabitants were happy there. All decisions were made in Assembly (as in all the Spanish squat movement), and the village economy collectivised. Sasé is one big family.

In July 1997 the unexpected support made eviction impractical, but on Thursday 13 October, 50 Guardia Civil arrived by surprise to evict the village, terrifying

the children, throwing a 9 month pregnant woman on the ground, etc. Villagers climbed on the dangerous roofs, up trees and on top of the church tower. The police arrested five people and bricked up houses, but at 6pm, with night falling they left the village for the long and difficult drive down. The houses were re-occupied and people went to phone for help.

On Friday 24 October a huge force of 32 vanloads, armed to the teeth with riot gear, launched an all-out attack on Sasé. However, the forest track had been sabotaged during the night, the convoy took three hours to arrive and meanwhile about fifty supporters had climbed up on foot. There was little that they could do, and the police savagely beat up the inhabitants, firing rubber bullets to force down people on roofs and in trees, and arrested thirty-two people. The rest escaped into the forest and came down at night to re-occupy the village. The press were excluded during the attack.

On Saturday and Sunday lesser forces of police and workers continued bricking up the village, emptying all the contents of the houses, seizing all possessions. The chickens, goats and the horse (Blues) were also lost on the mountain.

Meanwhile the action shifted to the courthouse in the

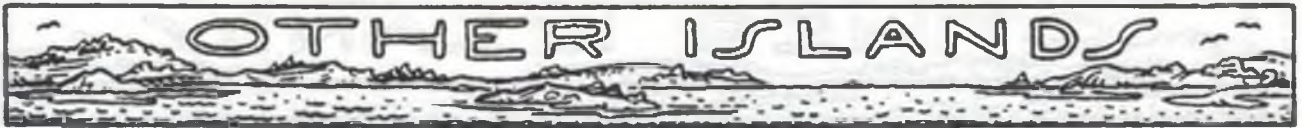
town of Boltaña, where the 37 people who had by then been arrested were held in terrible conditions, with a hundred people camped in the street outside, in sub-zero night temperature without food or adequate clothing.

Thirteen people immediately began a hunger strike, calling for the immediate release of the prisoners and the dropping of all charges, the return of Sasé to the villagers, and recognising us as living there and respecting our human rights which will now have been violated brutally and systematically.

On Sunday 26th in the evening, all but two of the prisoners were finally released (condi-



Communal food gardens at Sasé



tional on not going to Sasé), charged with occupation, serious disobedience and resistance to authority. However, two people—one woman, Cuna, and the Village baker, Choto—were kept inside with the added charge of attack on authority. The two prisoners were transferred to Zaragoza and Huesca but the camp and hunger strike continued. On Wednesday 29th the camp was threatened with eviction. Support demos began in Zaragoza and Barcelona. On Thursday morning the riot police arrived but didn't attack as a local doctor intervened. However, the tents had to be taken down.

Publicity was mostly confined to the local press and was often total lies. For example, one paper headlined a claim from the DGA that they had used 'patience and delicacy' in dealing with the villagers, without mentioning the hunger strike. Another report spoke of the villagers as 'human rubbish' and incredibly the Boltaña council offered us a camp site on the edge of the town dump. On Saturday 2 November, bolstered by supporters, the half-dead hunger strikers held a press conference in the dump—christened Rubbish Town—but hardly any press turned up.

Local towns were leafleted, signatures gathered, the whole area graffitied and on Sunday a circus-type musical demo was held in Aensa, a bigger local town, blocking an intersection—significantly without police intervention—and mounting a street exhibition.

Finally, on Monday 4th November, the last two prisoners were released provisionally. The hunger strike ended, fortunately, and the villagers began setting up a new camp by the river, not in the rubbish dump but on land owned by the Communist Party (though the villagers are not communists or in any party). During the weekend, permanent assemblies were held with visitors from all over, and all sleeping (very little) in the street. It was decided to focus on a national demo in Zaragoza, capital of Aragon for the next Saturday—8th November.

On Thursday 6th a fierce storm struck the peninsula, killing over thirty in the South. In Boltaña the Sasé campers were inches from the roaring river. The tents blew down and the site flooded, soaking everything. Meanwhile, support was growing, especially in Zaragoza, where food and clothing were gathered and buses organised from as far away as Sevilla (over 1000km away) for the demo. On Saturday 8th, over two thousand people gathered and marched through Zaragoza with music, fireworks, theatre, juggling and dancing. The party continued for hours, without police, outside the government headquarters. Finally a street camp in the Plaza de la Constitucion was set up. Simultaneous demonstrations had been held in

Barcelona, Madrid, Vigo, Paris and Berlin, in favour of Sasé. In Zaragoza messages of support were read out, including a moving one from Chiapas. That day a woman from Sasé had a new baby.

The next day there was another equally big demo in Zaragoza, for the villagers of Beceite, which is due to disappear under a new reservoir. The Sasé campers joined in and linked the two struggles.

The camp continued in Zaragoza city until Wednesday 11th when a march began 180km from Sasé. The march was organised as a mobile exhibition and it was planned to stop and inform in all towns and villages en route, taking at least a week. On Tuesday November 10th, fierce winds brought the first heavy snow to the Pyrenees.

With Love and Rage. To be continued...

How You Can Help Sasé:

- Demonstrate outside Spanish Embassies/consulates etc.
- Collect signatures and send by fax to the President of the DGA (976 714136)
- Collect money. We have a postal savings account at: Caja Postal de Ainsa, provincia de Huesca, Aragon. No 13022401-19-29/46.574.419
- Come and help - bring warm clothing!

Contacts:

The new Sasé mobile phone: 989 399580

Boltaña camp: 974/502405

Zaragoza - Entropia/infoshop: 976/295747

Barcelona - local infoshop: 3240643

E-mail: flokall@pangea.org

Internet site:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/8527>

Sasé Update

A large demo on 4th January '98 was a huge success. Around 400 people from all over Spain and beyond assembled at Boltaña and departed for Sasé at 6am in a large convoy of cars and trucks. Upon arrival at the village, to the stirring sound of the Galician Gaito (bagpipes), people took up sledgehammers and smashed the bricked up doorways. Sasé is now REOCUPIED! International pressure on the DGA is now more vital than ever, to ensure that there is no repetition of the events of October 24th!

Occupy, Resist, Produce

Brasil's Landless Peasants—Movimento Sem Terra



In 1997 hundreds of thousands of landless peasants banded together and occupied over 200 stretches of unused land in Brasil. In addition, 140,000 families have been resettled on land following direct action over the past 10 years. They are Brasil's, and in Noam Chomsky's eyes, the world's most important social movement. Over 90 % of Brasilians agree with what 'Movimento Sem Terra' do. Now the focus is on the cities and the centres of power. I hung out with MST recently, here's what I learnt....

The pompously titled book, 'The World in 1998', produced by the people of 'The Economist' magazine predict only two things can rock Brasil in 1998—'currency fluctuations' and 'increasingly aggressive protests by landless would-be farmers'!. The militant peasants who threaten to, and are, putting the fifth largest country in the world (and seventh largest economy) on the back foot are 'Movimento (dos Trabalhadores Rurais) Sem Terra'—literally 'Movement (of Rural Workers) Without Land', or Sem Terra for short. Sem Terra is the linking-up of Brasil's dispossessed; those thrown off their land by mechanisation and industrialisation of farming, croppers, casual pickers, those returned from the Amazon poorer than when they went. Sem Terra

call for, and take direct action to get, all Brasil's unused but potentially productive land taken from the large landowners (latifundios) and corporations, and given as small parcels to the poor. Like many of the most profound ideas the basic equation is deceptively simple. However, what flows is truly radical. One result is large numbers of politically active people with control over their own lives. Not passively asking the government for assistance, but taking what they need off the over-privileged. They have built a mass-scale social movement of the poor forming into small-scale co-operative communities producing what they need themselves. On their own terms. Actions have taken the form of land occupations, marches, multi-week

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office occupations, highway blockades and hunger strikes. They are heading for where much of the European radical environmental movement wants to go: a decentralised, militant, mass movement challenging capital and the state to allow the poor to take control, and in their case farming co-operatively in small autonomous groups.

Following this very short introduction to Sem Terra I will firstly describe the process of land invasion drawing on my own vivid experiences and what I have read about Sem Terra. Secondly I will focus on the history of the struggle for land in Brasil and political development of MST over its 13 years of existence which need to be put in a historical context to be understood. The idea is to understand how Sem Terra got to where they are so we can learn from them, while showing what MST are about, warts and all, not a romanticised anglo-radical-ecologist view. The broad range of Sem Terra action and the ferocious backlash from the state and landowners against Sem Terra is explored in the next section. The essay finishes with some suggestions of what we can learn from them and what we can do in solidarity with Sem Terra.

Land For All. Now.

Those who say no: no to drifting into the cities of Brasil, to joining the 30 million plus forced from their land who have swelled the urban slum-dweller and homeless numbers over the past 20 years, gather by roadsides in the rural nowhere land². Seeing whole communities lining the grass verges of the roads it is incredible that anyone survives. Some get by on picking crops for wages of less than Brasil's national minimum wage of about £70 a month. For comparison, food prices are comparative to those in the UK. Surrounded by idle land, there's no work. Not even any rich to beg off or rob. These are forgotten people.

Sabastiao Salgado, the internationally acclaimed photojournalist, summarises, 'Everything is lacking: water, food, lack of sanitary facilities, schools for children, medical attention, etc. In addition, the people live in the greatest insecurity, subject to the provocations and violence from jaguncoes, or hired gunmen, and other forces of oppression organised by the estate owners, who fear the occupation of their unproductive lands by the landless. In reality, the situation in these 'cities' of the landless is worse than the refugee camp in Africa, for they cannot depend on any protection from the authorities, they do not receive the slightest international assistance and neither the United Nations nor any humanitarian organisation comes to their aid.'³. However this seemingly unrelenting bleakness

is punctured by one all-important factor; a hope, a dream, of land. And solid direct political action to get it.

When a large enough group has gathered meticulous plans are laid down for an occupation. An example of this was the invasion in April 1996 of the 205,090 acre Giacomete plantation. In the dead of night over 12,000 people accumulate in a secret location. Once gathered, in silence, this human column snakes the 13.5 miles to the increasingly obvious destination. Silence, punctuated by heavy breathing, the only sign of the arrival of the army, scythes and pitchforks at the ready, in search of a dignified life. Everyone backs up. Everyone knows, no turning back—a 12,000 rag-tag group on one side of an insubstantial fence, a latifundio army of unknown magnitude the other side. With the full selection of local farm implements raised, the red flag of Sem Terra aloft—one brave, or foolhardy, soul bellows 'Agrarian reform—the struggle for all'. Gate locks smash. The dam breaks. The human river pours. There is no resistance from the well armed latifundio army. Sem Terra slogans are shouted with abandon.

The whole Sem Terra project at Giacomete, if fully implemented, would provide 4,000 families with the means to provide food, shelter and a dignified life for themselves, and an estimated total of about 8,000 jobs⁴. The land invasion sets a whole legal machinery into action. Under Brasil's constitution (like many other formerly colonised countries) unused land can be appropriated by the state. A three stage process takes place, firstly INCRA (the government's National Institute of Agrarian Reform) examines the area to identify if it is a latifundio. Secondly, a judge decides on the land's fate, and finally the landowner is paid compensation in national Treasury Bonds and the land passes to belonging to the peasants.

Visiting Giacomete some four months after the occupation started the initial chaotic scenes are now filled with tranquillity fused with boredom. The land is sub-tropical, cold at night in the winter, with steam rising in the morning, lifting off the camp like the insulation all should have, but few do. The afternoons are hot. As far as the eye can see are neat rows of black bin-bag plastic houses secured with string or vines. A permanent slight haze of smoke hangs above as maybe a thousand or more wood stoves cook another meagre meal (for those wealthy enough) of rice and beans. In several days I had still not seen any of the piped-media third world images, stagnant pools of water, drunks, piles of rubbish, prostitutes, open sewers, or drug dealers. Many pass their time playing football, chatting, playing cards, practising self defence, whatever. And of

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"Gate locks smash. The dam breaks. The human river pours."
12,000 occupy Giacomete, April 1996.

ing cards, practising self defence, whatever. And of course, attending meetings.

The camp is run by an impressive system of direct participatory meetings. Each family belongs to a group of about 30 other families. All individual and group problems are addressed by regular meetings. In addition, co-ordinators from these groups are nominated to deal with camp-level crises, in separate areas such as women's issues, health issues, security, and children's issues. The co-ordinators from each of the 92 groups meet regularly to discuss camp problems. The camp is its own autonomous unit. The main problem is, of course, poverty. There is no work for 12,000 people in a field. The government know this, using it to great effect. One tactic seems to be to starve the peasants out. As the peasants need money for food, when things get to such a desperate level they will be forced to leave to earn some money for food. The government generally drags land expropriations out as long as possible knowing this. The result is devastating: in four months 12 children had died as a result of a mix of hunger, cold and disease. Their deaths lay firmly with the government.

Camp life is squarely DIY. Everyone is landless and wants land, except those in the shop selling food at the cheapest possible prices direct from those who have gained land. The school is run by the landless, as is the pharmacy—carefully split into two—one half with modern white packets filling wooden shelves, the other stocked with a plethora of roots, leaves and twigs.

Perhaps the most scandalous aspect of camp life is that there is no resident doctor. The state only provides a frankly dodgy looking mini-ambulance (read estate car) to ferry the really sick to hospital.

In each case a judge can decide to give the peasants the land. Or send in the dreaded military police. Their main weapon is violence. Take this example: in Corumbiara in the state of Rondonia, on the southern fringe of the Amazon Basin 600 landless families in a camp called Santa Elina were attacked by police troops. At 3 am on

9th August 1995 police laid siege to the camp. The peasants fought back with rifles through the night. However, at daybreak the police backed by land-owner hired killers, all behelmed and faces blacked swept through the camp with shotguns burning houses to flush the peasants out. Ten peasants and two police were killed. The police claimed self defence. However the fact that one of the dead peasants was a 7 year old girl, shot in the back, from close range, fleeing her attackers speaks for itself.

History of the Struggle for Land in Brasil

Since the Europeans arrived various indigenous groups and Black slaves fought the Portuguese, in a sporadic, uncoordinated way. For the indigenous it was war against the encroaching whites. For the Black slaves the quest for land was bound with the struggle for freedom. Looting of the land was (is) so prevalent that Brasil even got its name from a wood—pau-Brasil—cut for export. The period 1850-1940 was characterised by many uncoordinated local struggles against politically well connected fazendeiros (farmers), struggles which were led by 'messianic' cultish figures. These struggles became more militant and less cult followings by the 1950's.

The period from about 1950 to the US-backed military coup in 1964 was characterised by radical struggles by large groups of peasants, principally: Ultabis (Unioes de Lavradores e Tradalhadores Agricolas do Brasil) in the Southern Brazilian states, Ligas

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Campesinas (Peasant League) in the state of Pernambuco, and Master (Movimento dos Agricultores Sem Terra) in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In 1964, thanks to the good ol' U. S. of A. peace was brought to the countryside. The peace of the cemetery. The military regime ruthlessly crushed all dissent. Most leaders were murdered or fled abroad. Things were so bad, that even the current Neoliberal technocrat president of Brasil, Ferdinando Henrique Cardoso, a then nonradical sociology professor, was forced to flee the country.

The military regime, forgetting that the Amazon rainforest was already populated sought to diffuse social tension and consolidate Brasil against attack from other countries by flooding the Amazon with Posseiros (direct producers on the land working without title).⁵

Once frontiers were opened up the fazendieros and southern land-based corporations gained title to the land and began forcing the Posseiros off the land (see Box). Meanwhile in various states in the late 1970's and early 1980's the pro-democracy movement was gaining momentum (three million industrial workers went on strike in 1979 alone) and peasants in various states invaded land, and impressively were mostly successful. Most importantly, one pivotal struggle was by the 7,400 or so Kaingang Indians expelled from the Nonoai reserve, where they had been working the land as Posseiros. They refused to leave the local area, and eventually gained land. In addition, those relocated by the creation of what was then the largest hydroelectric dam in the world, the Utaipu, generated the 'Terra e Justicia' (Land and Justice) movement, which also formed the backbone of MST.

In January 1984, the religious group that monitors violence against rural people—Commissao Pastoral da Terra—brought together these disparate groups, and in Cascavel in the state of Parana Movimento Sem Terra was born.

Political Development of Sem Terra

Movimento Sem Terra, born in 1984, has burgeoned from a few thousand uncoordinated land-squats, to at present one of the worlds largest direct action movements. In 1985, MST organised 35 land settlements, mobilising about 10,500 families⁶. A decade later 30,476 families occupied 146 tracts of land⁷. By 1997 about 40,000 families live on over 200 stretches of illegally occupied land. In addition 140,000 families have got land through direct action⁸. How has this formidable rise been possible, especially in the face of 1,636 murders between 1964 and 1995, with jail sentences being served in only two cases?

The first problem in analysing MST's emergence, consolidation and evolution is that they often defy simple classification. The left see Sem Terra as union-like. And yes, when it suits them they appear as union-like. Such that the collective struggle for land is to resolve its members' economic problems. Though this is where union likeness stops. Sem Terra define themselves as a) a social movement of landless peasants, b) popular, i.e. a mass organisation based on the actions of 'the people', for 'the people', and c) political—but not in the sense of a political party, but a commitment to a wide and radical plan of social change. No wonder the left are bemused and the right call them communists!

Fate of the Amazon

The fate of the Amazon rainforest is intimately tied to the quest of MST for land redistribution. The Amazon has and is used as Brasil's social pressure release valve. Land reform would stem the tide of those relocating to the Amazon to escape dire poverty in the north and south-east of Brasil. In addition, those that are already in the Amazon can make a positive contribution by getting land off the large fazendeiros who own the cattle ranches. If peasants had these lands they would have a stake (eating) to make these areas into long-term sustainable enterprises.

This is not what cattle ranchers or most loggers have in mind. It would be the peasants' permanent home, not a playground as it is for the rich. This would have the added benefit of producing food within Amazonia for Amazonians, and not relying on expensive imports from the South of Brasil. ["Outside the Amazon but within Brazil, an area of farmland the size of India lies uncultivated, as its owners treat it simply as a financial investment."

- George Monbiot, Guardian Earth Summit supplement, June 1992.]

The political structure is fairly simple. Firstly there is no such thing as 'membership'⁹. Those who are landless and do something about it are MST. Secondly decentralisation is the buzzword, as Joao Stedile explains, "Everything is decentralised: this is the secret of our success. The only thing centralised is a political line". This central line is 20 activists, 15 from camps (to keep power as far down as possible), and is designed to give Sem Terra a national voice where government, media and other groups can go to get information about MST.



The clever part of the structure is that only 5 of these names are ever made public. Thus even if all five were murdered within a short time-frame Sem Terra would march forth. Also having 5 names stops the media focusing on only one personality.

Starting from the bottom, each family on a land-squat is in a group with other families. These groups form a single, independent, autonomous, camp. These independent camps work together at a state level. This is perhaps the most crucial tier, as this networking allows the possible mobilisation of thousands and links those who have won land with those still struggling. There is only a skeleton at the national level. One tiny dull office in Sao Paulo where the monthly MST newspaper, *Journal dos Sem Terra*, is compiled, the 20 paid 'national co-ordinators' (who are always to be seen touring the camps, who travel by bus or shared van only as these are the only options available to the rest of the peasants movement), and that's about it. The national stuff is paid for by voluntary donations from the regional groups.

Straight out of the military dictatorship, MST living in slightly less oppressive times started with the slogan 'Without land reform we don't have democracy'. A year later (1985) the slogan of choice was 'Occupation is the only solution'. The need for greater militancy to achieve anything rapidly being noted even within the wider boundaries of democracy.

By 1987, times were changing. Again, for the better: 'Occupy, Resist, Produce' went the slogan. The important word and change here is 'Produce'. While Sem Terra had been getting some land off the large landowners they spent all effort on staging more invasions. However, the transformation from starving peasant living in a bin-bag tent to farmer was difficult for some to achieve; peasants with land were often losing it and ending up at square one again. The major change was to invest time and energy into keeping those with land on their land.

Co-operative farming was seen as the solution, the superior method of production. Producers on their communal farms then pass food on to secondary coops, run by ex-landless peasants, who pack the food off to markets and supermarkets. It is cool to buy rice and beans with 'LAND REFORM NOW' stamped on in huge letters. Sem Terra then put the icing on the cake by getting all these secondary coops together under the name 'Confederacao das Cooperativas de Reforma Agraria do Brasil', providing muscle against large companies. Even more practically, as MST (regionally) funds itself by levying a 2% tax on all that the farmers sell this makes MST a very circular organisation. As it grows, gets more land and sells more food it generates more income to help those without land, and organises even more spectacular actions.

By 1995, more land occupations were deemed not enough. A new slogan: 'Agrarian reform—the struggle of all' was coined. The plan now is to take on the cities. They say Brasil has to believe, be persuaded, that land reform is in its own interests. That the problem is central to everyone, including the bulk of the population who live in the cities. Not just those 'Sem Terra'.

These strategy points are bashed out at two-yearly 'National Meetings', of limited (200 people) attendance, and five-yearly 'National Congresses', the last of which had over 5000 in attendance, including those from over 20 peasant groups world-wide. The information is broadcast by the monthly newspaper, '*Journal dos Sem Terra*'.

Sem Terra in Action

The main actions are the land occupations. However, perhaps their most spectacular 'action' to date was the convergence of 120,000 people on the Brazilian capital, Brasilia, in April 1997. To coincide with the one year anniversary of 19 'Sem Terra' being summarily executed in a highway blockade in the state of Para, peasants marched from the North-East, the far South and Sao Paulo areas of Brasil, for over 6 weeks, final-



ly converging on Brasilia. When the scale of the march became apparent the day was hastily made a holiday for those in the capital city. Everyone was tripping over themselves to be friendly to what they usually term 'vagabundos' (which my Portuguese dictionary translates as vagrant/vagabond/of wretched quality/third rate/no-good). Four presidents went out to meet the march (Senate, Chamber of Deputies, Supreme Court, Republic), such is the worry that MST are causing. The government announced measures to speed land reform, and the World Bank stumped up loan money for land reform.

Not that money is a problem in all this. It would cost \$20 billion to settle 2 million families over 4 years. A lot. However the Brazilian government in 1995 spent \$12 billion on rescue operations for private companies and banks, according to University of Campinas economist Manoel Cardoso. Of course Sem Terra don't need fancy calculations to see what's happening. The killings continue. Large-scale land reform remains elusive. The politicians are ostensibly polite because everyone's watching. In the background they continue to plot against MST. As one unnamed activist said on the day, "We will believe them when they put their promises into practice. There have been thousands of promises. We have been continually betrayed. For now, it is just the politics of television, and the cemeteries"¹⁰.

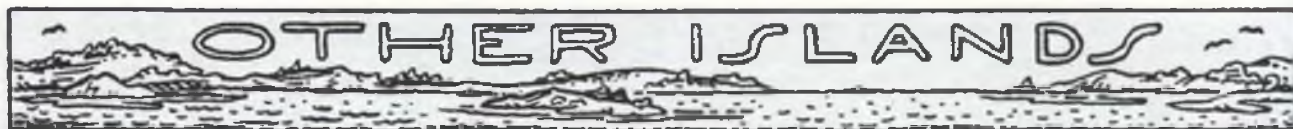
Movimento Sem Terra have tried all sorts of other tactics. These range from the tried and tested (finding it doesn't work is still a test) petitioning. A cool 1,600,000 signatures calling for large-scale land reform in 1987⁸. In 1996, after the decision to focus on the cities was taken, over 2000 landless would-be farmers blockaded downtown Sao Paulo highways. Within minutes, the metro workers ground the city's underground transport to a halt. The third largest city ground to a standstill. Like in the UK, office occupations can help those get what they want, with Sem Terra often shutting down INCRA (Brasil's National Institute for Agrarian Reform) offices until their claims

are dealt with. Marches, hunger strikes, town hall occupations, you name it, they've probably tried it. Except one thing. Armed struggle has been absent from their repertoire of action.

The question of the use of violence is a thorny issue in the UK. Much less so in a society where you are likely, if you make too much of an impact, to be silenced by a bullet. On the world stage, as MST spokesperson Joao Stedile puts it, "Many people think that a struggle is only radical when the masses are armed" [but note armed struggle is not necessarily radical: some Latin American radicals have dismissed the Zapatistas as 'armed reformists' or 'armed propagandists']. He then continues, "Our struggle has always been radical and never pacifist. But there is a grave silliness to joining armed struggle, with new confrontations with the state and military police. Our only chance of victory is to get everyone aware and participating, using whatever arms they are able to use. In our [land] occupations women, children and old people use what they have: wooden sticks, stones knives, scythes...Another has a 0.38 revolver. We don't recommend using firearms. This tactic is certain to frighten..."⁹. Or as an activist told me on my travels in Brasil: armed struggle is inherently undemocratic, unequalitarian, as not everyone can afford a gun. This would then marginalise the struggle to those with guns only. It then couldn't be mass-scale. Of course it would be the men of each family who would go off fighting....Thus it seems clear that MST are not opposed to violence, just opposed to having some elite armed force and being pigeon-holed as not radical because they don't bear (fire)arms.

Backlash

Sem Terra activists have been threatened, imprisoned, tortured and murdered. All for wanting, and trying to get, a piece of land to use to feed themselves. Those in power are not taking the rise of Sem Terra lying down. Oppression comes from two major



sources: the state and its dreaded *Policia Militar* (military police) and the landowners who hire gunmen and buy-off the courts.

Jovially swapping anecdotes and stores about radical protest in the UK and Brasil, silence diffuses rapidly down the rickety old transit-style van packed with Sem Terra activists and me. Not so far ahead is a roadblock. Manned by the armed *Policia Militar*. This is Pontal da Paranapenema, the place where Sem Terra activity is at its most militant. The police probably merely want to monitor movements so thousands can't get to the same place. Conflicting thoughts jar my mind: 'they wouldn't shoot me, I'm a foreigner' (arrogant but probably true), and 'fuck! these guys can do anything. Anything. Two cases solved out of 1,600 murders. They have nothing to fear'.

A darkly dressed man peers as we slow, but the wave of the semi-automatic means we can pass. Audibly we collectively sigh. But the spectre of violence lingers. Knowing these guys have no limits. They can kill and walk away. Take the most (in)famous case of violence against landless activists. The time was four-thirty pm, April 17th 1996 in the state of Para near a town called Eldorado dos Carajas (some readers will note that this is the place of the Grande Carajas project, the single largest piece of deforestation ever, cut to smelt pig iron—part funded by Lloyds Bank, coupled with crunching poverty as people flock to the scheme for work, but find none). [See also: "Bound in Misery and Iron: The Impact of the Grande Carajas Programme on the Indians of Brazil", Dave Treece, *Survival International* 1987.] One-thousand five hundred Sem Terra activists campaigning against the government's delay in settling families on the Macacheira plantation, which had been occupied for several months, blockaded the PA-150 highway. All day. In the late afternoon 155 troops were sent in from two barracks. They surrounded the protesters from both sides. And began to fire on the crowd with machine guns and rifles. A chaotic melee ensued. By the time all who could had scattered, the road was strewn with the bodies of 19 dead and 57 wounded activists. The operations commander on the day, Coronel Mario Collares Pantoja, was widely reported as saying, "Mission complete. Nobody saw anything".

The Coronel was wrong. A home-movie video camera has most of the action on it. This caused a public outcry. Immediately Nelson Massini, professor of forensic pathology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, was dispatched by the Senate Human Rights Committee. He confirmed that at least 10 of the dead had been removed from the road and were summarily

executed via bullets in the back of the head and neck. With powder burns showing the bullets were discharged at very close range. Seven of the other bodies had been hacked to pieces with a scythe or machete.

Events took an uglier twist a week later, when a landowner went on the radio anonymously, to allege that the local landowners had paid police US\$100,000 to remove known 'ringleaders' and halt protest in the area. In the usual Brazilian tactic, of waiting until the media-circus blows over then do what you were going to do anyway, after 3 months the Para state police appointed itself judge in the case, declaring publicly the innocence of its 155 troops. They alleged all acts were in self defence. If that were not enough: they also brought charges against activists for contempt, causing injuries to police and illegal possession of weapons. The weapons amounted to rocks, farm tools like scythes, and the huge arsenal of three pistols. Over a year after the killings 155 police are still on active duty.

The other main architect of violence against MST are the jaguncos, the big landowners' hired gunmen. In the mid-1990's there were, on average, about 40-50 murders in land disputes a year, mostly carried out by hired gunmen. Though this is only the extreme end of the problem. There were, in 1995, over 500 land conflicts involving about 381,000 people. Thousands of families were on the receiving end of violence against their property and possessions. The landowners link together in the 'Rural Democratic Union' (Uniao Democratica Ruralista—UDR), a plain misnomer. They used membership fees to buy and distribute guns to intimidate activists. These were behind the killing of Chico Mendes along with several prominent MST workers¹¹.

The backlash against MST is not just violence. Activists have been imprisoned under a system of 'prisao preventiva' (preventative prison) designed to get prominent activists out of the way for a while and intimidate them. Every year without fail many activists are imprisoned. Several activists have been 'fitted up' on bogus charges. And, of course, the media are used to distort the picture of Sem Terra. This is particularly relevant to the international view of MST as the few media items in Europe seem to be biased toward reporting when landless peasants chop a piece of rain-forest to grow food.

Life on the farm

The goal of the landless peasants is control over their own lives. Speaking with either those with land, or those on camps, the word 'dignity' keeps surfacing. The prospect of a dignified life is what drives. Not that

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once the landless get land life becomes suddenly easy. It has been shown from surveys that for the first 3 to 5 years after getting land life is still tough due to combining food production with building your house while growing enough to sell to pay off the credit to get farm tools and the like. However after this period the farms generate a good income. Sem Terra use technology if it helps them get what they need. As they live in a harsh economic world they use the tricks of capitalism as needed. For example, an inland co-operative I visited was toying with an experimental fish farming scheme, as fish could command high prices.

The da Silva family seem typical, mother, father, and three children. All the children were born in bin-bag plastic MST tents. His family lived on, and got thrown off, land and roadsides for 11 years before finally getting 20 hectares of land, as part of a group of 15 other families in the southern Brazilian state of Parana. The houses are all in a small group planted with fruit trees. The houses differ considerably from two-room wooden cabins, to the da Silva's multi-bedroom brick affair. I arrive at night and we eat the usual simple meal of rice and beans, but with a good green salad and meat which is unusual. I decline the meat, but as the vegetarianism discussion has already been broached we settle, with wife and children, to that cross-cultural barometer of working-class taste: football on the TV.

Early morning sees the two younger children off to school and the eldest off to agricultural college. Probably to get some farming tips for his fellow MSTers. I tour the farm. They grow lots of rice and vegetables, but not beans as their area is not so good for that. They have pigs, cows and chickens. All free range. Unfortunately, the first Monday in the month is chicken day. I am not prepared for this really. This squeamish veggie Brit was forced to watch and video a field of chickens being: hung by their legs from a washing line, necks sliced, stillness, passed indoors, feather removal, head removal, foot removal, innards removal, thorough wash (of bird), into a bag, and into a chest freezer. I'm sure it's better than what happens in the UK. But it still doesn't look nice, though apparently the profit is larger if you sell the finished clean item, not a whole live chicken (some grumble that the young Brazilians don't know how to cook properly). We spend lunch discussing the problems of co-operative living. What happens if someone doesn't pull their weight and the like. This group have a system whereby a core number of hours are to be worked which keeps the farm running. For this the family gets all its food from the coop and a sum of cash. Extra hours can be done for more cash. It had not happened there but

those not doing the prerequisite hours without excuses would be asked to leave. After this its off to town to check out the local co-operative.

In each settlement one person is often liberated from farming to allow them to be a political activist full-time and force on the Sem Terra agenda. This fulfils the vital function of getting 'off-farm' stuff done, like the organisation of new occupations and secondary coops. It importantly keeps those with and without land together. Fighting the same battle. The secondary coop is a hive of political activity, as those liberated from farming from about 10 communities gather to swap politico-gossip. The system seems impressive. These people seem happy.

Scale of MST Activity

To show what Sem Terra do here is everything that happened in July 1995: MORI style poll shows MST are more credible than the police or politicians; Leading Brazilian sociologist backs Sem Terra struggle; New co-operative starts in Parana; MST hold seminar about the mess of Rondonia; Seminar about teaching basic numeracy in camps and assentamentos; 300 families invade 480 ha estate in Sao Paulo state; 1000+ celebrate in a 'The Land Lives' march; food from those with land handed to poor in Dionisio, Santa Catarina; 200 families invade 217 ha property of Ministry of Agriculture (used by only 4 horses!) including students from Santa Catarina University; Daily TV soap opera continues to feature MST; UN lobby Brazilian government for enquiry into April 1996 Eldorado massacre; MST activist sent to prison; Indigenous people from 34 tribes protest in Brasilia against new laws; Articulacao Nacional de Mulheres (National Women's Articulation) have national meeting about violence and women living on camps.

The Future—for Us and Them

The MST of five years in the future is impossible to predict with accuracy. While they have consolidated and captured a few hard-won gains, at its most basic level they have so far failed to secure large-scale land redistribution. But Sem Terra are at the top of the political agenda. If the current strategy of linking with the voluminous urban poor takes effect things could spiral up and into MST's lap.

There are some things we in the UK can do. We could do solidarity actions. Sem Terra have called for April 17th to be 'International Day of the Struggle for Land'. In the UK, where we have the 5th worst land concentration record in the world, it would be cool to have a major militant action drawing what is happening in the

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UK, with the struggles in Brasil, Mexico and other regions of the world.

Perhaps most importantly (third world activists often say this) is that those in the South need to see similar agendas to theirs being pushed in the North. This is an extremely important aspect to solidarity. Not only campaigning 'for' them and their efforts, but 'with' them and against the common enemy. Activists in Brasil were genuinely enthused and excited (even though I was embarrassed) when I said we now, as of 1995, have a land rights campaign in the UK, and that there were people planning to live on their land and grow food, who were poor and not agribusiness. In times of suffering and doubt, this can really help those in the South 'legitimise' their struggle and take strength that they are part of something even bigger.

The radical environmental movement in the UK could learn lots from Sem Terra, as in many ways they have got much further than we have in the direction we want to go. They have built a large-scale mass movement rooted in the people in a decentralised way. They have worked around potential problems like violence (and at present are in a phase of confronting the problems of sexism within the movement) coming up with often clever, novel, ways around conflicts. Everything, even to being a national spokesperson, has been carefully kept within the reach and skill of peasants who may never have attended school. That is a seriously 'everything open to all' policy. While Western academics have failed to study Sem Terra it is up to activists to learn about them and their tricks. How do they inspire people? How do people stay active when they have land? How exactly do they come to decisions such as 'let's focus on getting the cities and urban poor involved in our struggle'? To this end some of us are getting hold of some MST literature and getting it translated into English.

Whether it's our radical environmental movement doing Sem Terra style land invasions in the future, the latest atrocity read about in the Guardian, or the BBC with footage of half a million armed peasants attacking the Brazilian congress. Or thousands more than the 140,000 families now living a dignified life, we'll be hearing a lot more about Movimento Sem Terra I'm sure.

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Green Fort versus Mean Port

Come 'ave ago if you think you're harbour enough

It all began over a year ago when the Dutch direct action movement Green Front! started, based upon the ideas of the British Earth First! Several Dutch activists had been over to the action camps at Newbury, Fairmile and Manchester to learn from their British counterparts. The small group of activists decided it was time for Green Front! to start, as the Dutch environmental movement was (and is) ruled by big bureaucratic organisations that have their own agendas and actions and do not co-operate much with each other or small local actions. Everywhere in the country critical mass groups had started and two Reclaim the Streets Parties had been organised in Amsterdam. But not much of a reaction from the Big Brothers of the Environment.

The actions of Green Front! concentrated around traffic and nature issues. Several times building sites for roads and bridges had been occupied for a day, and in April 1997 the group went on tour with visiting British Earth First! activists to different cities in the Netherlands; a building site for a parking garage got occupied in Nijmegen, and some climbing lessons were given in threatened trees in Amsterdam. In July the main event of the year started and the action camp Groenord was founded on 16 July 1997.

"Action is a celebration of awareness."

Ivan Illich said this once. For 5 months a Dutch action movement has challenged the Amsterdam city government, which has rejected several referenda telling them to stop building big prestigious public works like new traffic tunnels, a new metro system, new living areas where nature used to be, and finally the new Afrika-harbour near the village of Ruigoord, just outside the city. The people of Amsterdam seem to be fed up with everything the city government comes up with but the government goes on anyway. Facing major financial difficulties and sometimes: Real Life Direct Action.

GROENORD I

A Hot Summer

The 16th July was a wet morning when close to 30 people moved into the nature area that was destined to become a concrete harbour. They walked into the area carrying pallets, tools, tent materials, and accompanied

by a big amount of press. A central place was built out of wooden pallets (soon named "the pallet bar") and used as bar, kitchen, toolshed, living room, and information point. A mixed group of young and older activists moved in, Groen Front! veterans, squatters, nature friends and old hippies.

The camp was situated next to the village of Ruigoord, a well-known place for artists, summer festivals in nature, a place where the sixties and seventies are still very much alive. The village itself had to move away 25 years ago for the harbour but got squatted by the present villagers, and after an oil crisis and other problems the harbour never got built. This year the Amsterdam city council decided to build the harbour after all, it was supposed to be good for employment and economy. Rumours had it, regional and local authorities needed to get rid of a huge amount of polluted soil that they want to dump in the harbour. The villagers have been really helpful since the beginning of the action camp, they were still doing their own legal actions but were happy with "those young people" who were out there to change the world, like they did so many years ago.

The camp got built up steadily and without police interruption (it was the summer holidays), people were climbing trees—a thing they had not done since childhood—and treehuts got built. People started on tunnels which were to be used here for the first time in the Netherlands, all kinds of people and groups offered material and financial support. It was growing, parties were happening, campfire lit evenings. In the central area of the camp a new bigger kitchen got built, an info stand was made, an exposition in the village church. People lived there for shorter and longer times, new camps got built outside of the main camp, e.g. the traveller camp "120" (they found a door with that number on it), and "Iepenfront", an Amsterdam squatters' camp in high trees, (the Amsterdam squat movement seemed to have their summer holidays at Groenord!), or the "Egeltjesfront" (Hedgehog Front) on another dike closer to the village. Waiting for the building holidays to end, with lots of media attention, Groenord developed into a living alternative community. You could say that the Dutch action movement invented the wheel of action camps again, inspired by German and British



examples but in a very Dutch way. It was a happening, for sure. For some old activists dreams came true. A new movement was born!

Of course, this mix of people brought its own kinds of tension as well, problems between visitors and people living at the camp, between those living in the camp, between men and women in the camp. For a long time the camp was totally male-dominated with few women who were also leaving faster. This changed a bit later on. The camp was set up by the Dutch Earth First! (called Groen Front!) but during the months it developed its own life, and became an independent group connected to Groen Front! Groenoord became a famous name in the action movement. Activists from all over the country were talking about Groenoord, visiting it or staying there. Groenoord activists showed up at lots of actions, mostly in groups, and not only in Amsterdam. A network was formed.

In the middle of a heatwave the campers built on, on Sunday 24th of August hundreds of people came to the place where diggers had already started on the harbour before the camp started: a canal of a few hundred meters long, officially a 'returnable activity' (government talk). The activists, lots often bringing their children, dogs, parents etc, came there to return the returnable. Hundreds of people worked on putting the sand back in the canal with spades or by hand, and at the end of the day the canal was crossed by several sand bridges and was not very deep anymore. A big action of solidarity for the action camp. That Monday the building holidays ended and the waiting began.

The Waiting

The action camp was prepared. People practiced what to do for an eviction. Locks and lock-ons were checked, food packets were stored in huts and tunnels. Thursday 28th of August the first digging machine came, accompanied by police, to the canal. After a short while a group of activists seated themselves in front of and on the machine, and it retreated, taking the cops with it. It was quiet again for a while. In the mean time solidarity activities for the camp were organised, the Amsterdam Autolozen (critical mass) blocked the highway west of Amsterdam to protest against the new road and harbour plans west of Amsterdam, including the harbour at the action camp, and a group of them came to visit and eat at the camp.

A month passed. On Saturday 27 September saw a big benefit party in one of Amsterdam's most famous squats, Vrankrijk. Bands, videos and people from the camp performed. That Sunday the camp prepared itself once again for eviction. Monday 29th September

phones and faxes were ringing all over The Netherlands that the action camp was being evicted; police were at the area, everyone was worried. People and press came from all over the country. It was more of a last warning, the police wanted to make appointments for the safety of the camp and its inhabitants during possible eviction. That Thursday most people from the action camp were at a protest against EU leaders in Amsterdam when an alarm came in from the camp. A bus was organised and up to 60 people went to the camp. The police had left already, it was a false alarm.

The End?

Monday 6th October they came: an army of 850 riot police, with shovels, diggers, cherry pickers. The camp prepared, the media checked their cameras. People chained themselves to the roads, climbed into their trees and down tunnels, put up barricades of burning wood. An important looking police officer offered the campers a last chance to leave the area. They refused. The police left the camp alone for a while but started closing it off from the outside world. Several kilometres of fence were put around the area and guarded. Shovels started making room for parking places for the police, making roads for the other machines. Activists who jumped on the shovels were beaten off by the police. People came to the camp and tried to get in with supplies, climbing over fences... In trees and huts people sat, listening in to the police radio and talking to each other by portable phones. The press called it "activism by satellite". Monday night, the police had cleared the ground, people were taken off the area and put onto a bus to the nearest railway station. Most of them came back. The area looked like a prison camp: long fences as far as you could see, big lights and guards with dogs. Some people did manage to sneak in still, one activist was arrested for destroying three of the lights.

Early Tuesday morning the police started on the tunnels and treehuts. A careless shovel drove over a tunnel and it collapsed; the activist in there could get away in time. He stayed. The police already cleared out the area around the camp, leaving an open space where beautiful nature with rare plants and animals used to be. It was whispered that the city government allowed hunting in the area to get it 'cleaned out'. One by one people were taken out of their tree huts, some of them climbing in tops of trees to keep the police off. The police sent in a crane with a container hanging from it to get to the tree people. Tunnels were dug out by hand mostly. The last activists were taken out of the camp at

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THE BATTLE OF THE GREEN FORTRESS

Groennoord II—The Sequel

The place where the action camp once was was a muddy moonscape. Some people lived in tents at the edge of the area, and slowly they started collecting building materials for what was soon known as Groennoord II. Ideas developed, and the activists started to build a big fortress out of old wood at the same place where Groennoord I used to be. The Green Fortress was born. It was a place with high walls, towers, lock-ons, tunnels and a good roof and heating, really important in the cold days. A smaller group of people were living here, and had a comfortable home in the desert-like area that used to be a nice piece of nature. People were building and extending the fortress during the weeks. In the end of November the harbour authorities started digging, heavily guarded by riot police. The activists of Groen Front! occupied their main building for a day.

around 6pm. They gathered in the village, at the church. The area was destroyed and locked off, guarded heavily, the camp was gone, was it all for nothing?

Some people did sneak into the area by night, making the guards nervous. Attempts were made at having demos in the Amsterdam city centre, and a press conference. This came together on the Saturday after, when a press conference took place at the local environmental centre, and close to a thousand people protested in Amsterdam city centre against the destruction of the camp, the nature, the village. At the demonstration a group of dockers from the Amsterdam harbours joined in. They had just been fired and did not believe the talk of employment in the new harbour, they did not believe the talk of new jobs. Interesting coalitions...

The demonstration stopped at the Dam square, where some climbers from the camp climbed onto the national monument and let down banners with the text "Groennoord Leeft Voort" (Groennoord lives on!). Arriving at the city hall, the mayor was not in and the deputy mayor (who is very well known for all kinds of infrastructure projects) took a petition for a referendum on the harbour, and a stop on destruction of the area and dumping the soil. He "would discuss it", was all he could say.

On the same day an empty shipwharf in the nearby harbour was squatted as support for Groennoord. The place had been a squat before but was evicted 4 years ago for 'storage room' but was never utilised, showing that even the existing harbour was not totally used (the city government keeps telling us the new harbour is needed 'because the old ones are full'). In the weekend the fences and guarding police disappeared from the camp area. It was costing hundreds of thousands a day. (The eviction was rumoured to have cost over a million guilders.) On Sunday a walker's action group walked the area, and a requiem mass was held in the village church.

Monday December 1st saw the end of another chapter of the Groennoord story. Activists from the fortress were blocking the entrance of the working site, and climbed on machines. 20 of them were arrested, and the police decided to take the fortress. In the dark a grim struggle took place, resulting in the eviction of all 25 inhabitants of the fortress and total destruction of the building. No more arrests were made, but the eviction again resulted in destruction of personal property, and great personal danger for the tunnel people who saw their roofs lowering when shovels drove around the area, and for those who the police tried to pull out of their lock-ons by force. It was lucky no one got hurt. The police spoke of a 'peaceful, easy and neat eviction'. Reactions came soon, lots of complaints have been filed by the lawyer of Groennoord, the construction company saw an occupation of their main entrance by a group of Groen Front! (reaction: "but we are only doing our job...") and around 50 people went to a demonstration in the city centre against the second eviction of Groennoord. The demonstration walked through city hall on its way.

Some people were carrying a banner saying "Groennoord III". Lots of activists met each other again in the weeks after the eviction and started making other plans, including ways of passing on the knowledge of Groennoord to other activists. The harbour building may be starting, but the protests will not stop here...

GROENNOORD LEEFT VOORT!

For Groen Front! contact details see International Contacts at the back of this issue.

Tíocfáidh Ár La

Pixies Reclaiming Ireland



The restlessness of some pixies who magicked onto a Carlow farm to rearrange some genetically-engineered sugar beet belonging to Monsanto has focused the debate on direct action in Ireland, and has exposed the organised green movement for what it is—arrogant, loud, ineffectual and inconsistent. Green MEP Nuala Aherne showed her true political colours and a large dose of egoism to denounce the Carlow weeding on national radio, because it was “violent” and “done at night”, while the Green Party’s other MEP Patricia McKenna announced proudly and enthusiastically: “If Monsanto, which was carrying out the sugar beet trials and the Environmental Protection Agency which licensed the trials, insist on playing games with the Irish environment, then fair play to those who challenge them through peaceful direct action.”

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Aherne's stance has managed to confirm opinions from many quarters about those who call themselves environmentalists in Ireland. Ever since the occupation of the woods in the Glen of the Downs in north county Wicklow became a media event in September 1997, highlighting the Dublin state's plans to widen the present two-lane road through the Glen into a four-lane highway, she has been vociferous in her criticism of those whose actions speak louder than the political theatre of the organised greens. "I would hate people to get the impression that we need foreigners to save our trees," she told some media heads who wouldn't know an acorn from a rugby ball. "We have never wanted trees to come down and the Green Party has worked very hard on this issue, which I brought up myself back in 1991. A lot of people feel that the compromise that has been achieved is the best possible option."

Aherne, who lives a few miles from the Glen in Greystones, (a salubrious seaside retreat for Dublin's nouveau riche), was joined in her moral justifications by the local paper, *The Wicklow People*, who triumphantly decreed that "ecowarriors" were "not wanted here". By foreigners she obviously meant people not from the local environs of Greystones, Delgany, Kilquade, Kilpedder and Kilmacanogue, because she couldn't possibly mean people with English accents. Aherne's ignorance of the issues is thankfully not shared by local people, who have been keen to get involved and provide support. Food and timber and rope was dropped in by local sympathisers soon after the occupation of the Glen began. In one three hour period 23 people came up to the camp. They listened intently to the arguments for the protection of the woodlands of the Glen and the wetlands of Kilmacanogue, and why the 26-County state's decision to go ahead with the road widening is an indictment of a system that ignores its own laws when they become 'inconvenient'. By mid-January following an appearance on Irish television of a campaigner and some supporters, 2,000 people attended the Glen.

The locals, unlike Aherne, know that the people who started this occupation have Irish accents and that it is an Irish campaign, albeit with support from all over the globe. And if you believed what the mainstream Irish media has said about this protest you'd have the impression that it was about feisty unclean youth, a few furry animals, a large dose of utopian idealism and a flying squad of English ecowarriors. But as anyone who has ever been on an action knows, it is the fact that people are prepared to occupy an area of land to defend it that really bothers the state. In Ireland, particularly and significantly, this protest at last raises the issues

which are at the heart of our capitalist society—unfettered growth, the omniscience of the machine and the failure to provide alternatives to globalisation. Perhaps Aherne has somehow missed the fact that the car is a symbol of 20th century capitalism, which for many represents an obsessive display of individualism, for others a sorrowful dependence. It produces a car culture that feeds the oil, chemical, steel and construction companies who are responsible for much of the damage being wrought on the planet and its inhabitants. Perhaps she has missed the fact that vehicular traffic is also responsible for the massive rise in respiratory illness and cancer among the people of the western world.

The image of Ireland as a country somehow immune from these questions is now being shattered, whether Aherne wants to acknowledge it or not, and direct action—which has always been part of Irish culture—has at last got a distinctive green and red tinge with strong undertones of anarchistic black. Green, pleasant and friendly Ireland might be if you believe the southern state's tourist propaganda, but the reality is different.

Since the occupation of the Glen became establishment news, the state and apologists such as Aherne have stressed that the new road will do minimal damage, but even the site engineers find it hard to support this statement. "There's no way you can put a road through anywhere without causing some damage," as one acknowledged, and, according to the County Council, at least 1700 trees will be felled. Even Ove Arup, the consultants who prepared the 1991 environmental impact statement, stressed that the widening of the road will have a serious impact on the oak-beech and ash-hazel woodlands of the Glen. "A long-standing naturalised woodland such as that of the Glen of the Downs is an extremely complex and sensitive ecosystem and cannot be artificially replicated in periods of less than 100 years".

As a consequence of Arup's original study and following the initial, albeit cursory, opposition from Aherne and her friends (if they are to be believed), the 26-County Department of the Environment requested a further study from Arup, to examine the option of widening the road on the western side of the Glen, instead of the eastern side. This is the option Wicklow County Council have gone for, "to minimise as much as possible the impact on the natural habitats". This is Aherne's compromise! However the Office of Public Works expressed its concern about both options. In 1992 they said both options were inconsistent with their role in the protection of ecosystems. Three years

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later the OPW dropped its objections. If construction is allowed to go ahead the chainsaws will still destroy beech, oak and ash-hazel woodland and the diggers will still encroach on the northern edge of the stream which runs through the Glen. Birds, insects and animals will still suffer as a consequence. This unique ecosystem will be no more. Unless the construction is stopped! And despite the popularity of the campaign that may not happen. Major mistakes have been made. Despite warnings that the state was ready to destroy the Glen, it wasn't until a team of workers wielding chainsaws started cutting down trees that the necessary support was provided to stop them. A court injunction prevented further destruction.

Now that the campaign to save the Glen has gathered popular support—despite the presence of greens who are trying to build careers on the back of the protest—the power brokers are going to great lengths to get their Super Highway built through the garden of Ireland. In 1991 the local group made a plea to the European bureaucrats to save the broadleaved Glen. They wrote to DGXI, the EC's environment section, complaining that the proposed road would contravene ecological and environmental legislation. DGXI told them that the habitat directive was not in force and the environmental impact statement complied with the environmental impact assessment directive. DGXI noted they were aware of the potential environmental damage and said they would refer their concerns to DGXVI, the EC's funding section. The EC are providing 85 percent of the road's costs as part of the Trans-European Road Network (TERN) scheme.

By 1996 it was obvious that Dublin were determined that the road should be built. The local opposition faded away, believing no more could be done. Several people equally determined to stop the destruction planned a direct action campaign. It took them a year to get the campaign going. A permanent camp was established in the Glen. Propaganda and lobbying followed. The Irish Department of Environment were requested to release, under the Freedom of Information Act, the documentation relevant to the planning application. The state department refused. One campaigner wrote to DGXI, complaining that documentation that should be in the public domain was being withheld by

the Irish state. In response DGXI said it would contact the Irish government to learn why the documentation had not been supplied. DGXI also said they would investigate the effects of the construction of the road on the Glen's habitat.

It is probably a small mercy that Aherne's party is not in agreement with her on this issue (and perhaps on many more). Ciaran Cuffe, the Green Party spokesperson on public transport, announced publicly that he supported the presence of the protesters in the Glen and the campaign they are waging.

But it doesn't really matter what the Green Party thinks of the actions in Wicklow and in Carlow. What is happening just now in Ireland—road building and the planting of GE-seeds—is just another consequence of capitalist growth, and just as

direct action has been a factor in the opposition to this growth in America, Britain, Germany and other countries, so it is in Ireland. Anti-road campaigns have not been a feature thus far of Irish environmentalism, largely because the social and economic factors [in Ireland] have obscured most of the arguments used in Britain, and because virtually none of the new dual carriageways and motorways being built in Ireland have threatened ecologically sensitive areas. That is, until now—and if Aherne and her media friends think that we are going to sit back and allow Ireland to be destroyed then her ignorance of radical green politics is even sadder than her arrogance.

Direct action has been a feature of the opposition to capitalist development in Ireland since the state decided in the late 1950s that it wanted a semi-industrial/pollution haven for the global corporations, and a post-modern utopia for the acolytes and apologists who attach themselves to their corporate machine. And this direct action has always been controversial and effective.

Back in February 1989 it was so effective that Padraic White, (the former chairman of Ireland's Industrial Development Agency (IDA)), warned that those who were protesting against the industrial projects his agency was trying to promote were threatening new jobs. At one stage the IDA, spilling crocodile tears, moaned that it would have to stop advising chemical and pharmaceutical corporations to locate in Ireland.



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Following the defeat of Merrell Dow's plans to locate a drug factory in east Cork, the bold Padraic announced that small undemocratic groups were blocking industrial development. As one observer put it at the time, "there has been a superficial tendency that has tried to write off the opposition to Merrell Dow purely as a response to the victory of the Hanrahan family against drug company Merck Sharp and Dohme in the Supreme Court in 1988"². They emphasised however that the campaign against Dow cannot be dismissed as a one-off opposition sparked by the Hanrahan victory. "It was in fact part of a major resurgence over the past few years in community opposition to development plans for their local areas that the communities considered toxic or hazardous. This opposition was not confined simply to the chemical industry but also included opposition to extractive industry such as mining and quarrying, to intensive mariculture such as fish farming, to proposed toxic waste dumping and to other developments as varied as broadcasting masts, high power lines and meat factories."

This opposition has continued throughout the nineties, and from time to time tales about little bands of pixies doing "violent" things in the middle of the night have entered the folklore. And from time to time these pixies have adopted the human form to protest publicly about the issues the organised greens can't seem to deal with; like the morning Limerick farmer Liam Somers decided enough was enough. When he heard that the Irish EPA had given a licence to chemical company Syntex (now Roche) to operate a toxic waste incinerator, he got some paint out and composed a banner on a bit of cloth. Less than an hour after leaving his farm in east Limerick the man whose herd has been killed by toxic pollution was standing outside the gates of Syntex's chemical factory in Clarecastle with a banner letting everyone know what he thought of the EPA: "How can you licence these people when you don't even know what killed my cattle?"

"I was overwhelmed," said one of the protesters who had been fighting Syntex's plans to build the incinerator for the best part of a year, "that a 60 year old man whose livelihood has been destroyed can do something like this. We got up there to join him along with a rake

of children". That morning, in turning down the community's appeal against the incinerator, the EPA had effectively dismissed their fears about the health effects from toxic pollution, "We're being poisoned and the state doesn't care," one protester lamented.

In west Cork—which has a tradition of direct action—attempts to plant environmentally damaging spruce and sitka in one of the most beautiful parts of the county were resisted by a few hardy souls who treated the drivers of several JCBs to a display of the subtle sport of digger diving. The developers had originally agreed to talk, but then tried to move in early one morning, mistakenly believing that they could level the land while the community was asleep. Also in West Cork, the state's attempts to re-establish an oil terminal on Whiddy Island in Bantry Bay were left high and dry

when, barely a few months after the single-buoy mooring was completed, the oil pipes disintegrated. Apparently they blamed poor work by the welders. (West Cork pixies can swim!)

In Donegal equipment belonging to the Electricity Supply Board was mysteriously destroyed—probably by the pixies who live on Barnesmore Bog and weren't too keen on the state's £15 million windfarm for Barnesmore. In Dublin, while state ministers pranced around in delight at the opening of another section of the ring road which is supposed to relieve the city's traffic problems, a few souls unfurled a banner and refused to move. In Clare, where the battle to build a centre in Mullaghmore in the heart of the ecologically-sensitive Burren [one of the largest areas of rare 'limestone pavement' habitat in the world] left the state bruised and bloodied throughout the early nineties, the pixies are not asleep. They have at least one eye open for the new battle for Mullaghmore, following Clare County council's decision to grant permission for a building on 110



sq. metres and a car park on 1.5 acres at Gortlecka.

In Cavan engineers attempting to work on a telecommunications mast were thwarted by a crowd of at least 100 locals who had set up camp to protect the mountain of Lough an Lea. The mountain already has 11 such masts and there are plans to erect about 700 such masts all over the country. When the engineers arrived supported by a convoy of police they were faced with



a road block put up by a few people. The police started to take names, but were suddenly engulfed as people started appearing out of ditches and fields to swiftly outnumber the contingent of engineers and cops. The police gave up on the idea of taking names and the engineers retreated. There are now two caravans on the site, with a round the clock watch by residents, ready to call a mass mobilisation of locals when needed. They never have needed the help of pixies in Cavan! The campaign against the masts gathered momentum through the winter of 97/98. In some areas angle grinders have been used to fell masts.

Through the eighties and nineties direct action has been a factor in environmental campaigning in Ireland but it has never been a movement, it has always been isolated and fragmented—a reaction with a single focus, without a strategy. While this kind of spontaneous action has slowed industrial development down, and occasionally even derailed the corporate juggernaut, it has been unable to direct the focus onto the reasons why a radical opposition must exist, and why that opposition needs to challenge and change capitalist society. Without any kind of integral ecological, economic, social and political analysis, communities fighting undesirable development find themselves fragmented and confused, unable to take their campaigns beyond the parochial.

Successfully marginalised in this way community groups gradually become powerless, their energy reduced to the flickering flame of single issue campaigns, with burn out inevitable. In the midst of all this the issues are left among the debris, while the cause of environmentalism becomes another aspect of capitalist society. That the organised green movement is unable to understand this has much to do with its origins—which are the same as those who work for the state and industry. Each comes to the battlements from a comfortable, elitist world; essentially because those in industry are paradigmatic of western capitalist development, while those in the mainstream green movement are paradigmatic of western liberal or romantic bourgeois society. Both are products of western industrial development. By failing to consider this flaw in their character the organised greens have lost their way and have become subsumed into the same culture they are supposed to be attacking.

Significantly the greens have struggled to identify with the communities they are supposed to be saving. Instead of retaining the anarchistic politics it began with, the green movement has become part of the mainstream political and economic culture, abetted by strong hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic sys-

tems. Rather than helping to empower communities in their challenges against industry, the green movement has attempted to usurp what little power communities have by placing themselves in the vanguard of campaigns, seeking instead the power and the glory. In simple terms this negates any self-empowerment. The emancipatory logic they may have started with is warped into aborted, subservient, and conventional ideologies of the status quo, an argument made by social ecologist Murray Bookchin. "The problem they face is the need to discover the sweeping implications of the issues they raise; the achievement of a totally new, non-hierarchical society in which the domination of nature by man, of woman by man, and of society by the state is completely abolished—technologically, institutionally, culturally and in the very rationality and sensibilities of the individual."

So while the likes of Aherne and a few fascistic editors believe that we don't need ecowarriors in Ireland, a few of us actually know that it's not 'ecowarriors' we need but genuine radicals who understand why the corporate machine must be stopped in its tracks. For the moment Ireland is dominated by nice liberal greens who think they are doing a good job, even if it does involve a bit of compromise here and there. That is changing.

The actions against the road in Wicklow and the GE-sugar beet in Carlow are an indication, (and for the time being, nothing more), that a radical direct action movement is beginning to form in Ireland. Wicklow and Carlow were carefully planned actions, even if their execution was anarchistic. The decision to establish a camp in the Glen of the Downs was made in the summer of 1996. The decision to remove unwanted weeds from Carlow was made when the 26-County state allowed Monsanto's seeds to be planted. But other actions, eg. against the hitherto undisturbed Irish workings of McDonalds, against Shell petrol stations (as part of the '100 days against Oil' campaign), against the foreign chemical companies (as part of End Corporate Dominance) and against the EPA (for loads of reasons), were never realised, and this is the problem facing those who want to stop the destruction on this little piece of the planet: there aren't enough of us. And until the movement grows there'll be little pixies running all over the place doing 'violent' things in the middle of the night, just for the craic. That's great fun but it won't mean anything more than that.

Listening to Nuala Aherne and Patricia McKenna slagging each other off on the radio is a hint that a revived radical green sensibility is being awakened, but the green movement in Ireland needs to consider its

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history and wonder why it's no longer being written. Anyone looking at Irish society and the role that environmentalists have played over the years could be forgiven for believing it has been a great success story—especially if they only listened to those who made Ireland nuke-free, and to a lesser extent to those involved in campaigns highlighting specific ecological destruction and the protection of endangered species. This is easily put in perspective. Asked how effective the greens are as political lobbyists, one of Ireland's most prominent politicians answered: "Not as effective as SPUC, thank God." (SPUC is the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child who initiated anti-abortion campaigns during the eighties and nineties.)

If the qualification was meant to imply that the green movement could have an enormous social, economic and political impact on Irish society if it got its act together, there are many who would agree with him, and they are not all on the Left. The reason for this ineffectiveness has much to do with the Irish green movement's tentative beginnings and its present nebulous existence in Irish life. In Ireland the emergence of the modern green movement had more to do with industrial and governmental policies of the late fifties, and a lot less to do with the global issues which forced it onto the public agenda in America, Britain and Germany. Anti-toxic and anti-mining groups evolved out of the anti-nuclear movement of the mid-seventies. Friends of the Earth set up in Dublin in 1974 and offshoots sprung up around the country, concerned largely with the proposed Carnsore nuclear power station in county Wexford.

While the campaigns of the seventies were primarily about nuclear issues, (Windscale/Sellafield, Carnsore, radioactive waste dumping, uranium mining), a general concern about environmental degradation prompted some people to drop out of society altogether. Rural parts of Ireland became green havens for foreigners and Irish alike. One of the most successful initiatives of this era was 'Common Ground', a magazine started in 1977 as 'The North-West Newsletter' by a group of people living alternative lifestyles. According to Charley Langrish, one of the present editorial team, "Common Ground has always been run by a free floating editorial group, with people coming and going at will; a fairly anarchic set up which works well most of the time. The magazine relies unashamedly on pieces sent in by readers. Nobody is paid a dime ... It began as a fairly practical publication, a platform for the exchange of personal experiences concerning the writers' various endeavours towards living their lives as far as possible divorced from the capitalist system."

By the end of the seventies alternative living and environmentalism were sexy terms, and more and more groups began to form. Those who believed it was possible to work within the capitalist system and still raise the green agenda began to move, as academic Sue Baker put it, "towards life-style issues, alternative energy sources and what may be called 'green politics'". This progressive institutionalisation of the green movement culminated in the formation of the Green Party in 1988. Within a year it had its first TD (MP), representing Dublin South. The party now has two TDs, two MEPs and a good van load of councillors.



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As the green movement continued to grow throughout the late eighties, An Taisce [Ireland's more campaigning version of the National Trust, founded in 1948] lost its mantle as the only 26-County body stating the environmental issue. By 1986, Earthwatch had developed out of a west Cork group formed in 1980 to oppose radioactive dumping, subsequently becoming a member of Friends of the Earth International. In May 1987, former green activist John Bowler was appointed Greenpeace Ireland's national co-ordinator. By the turn of the decade the green movement was a chameleon-like creation, with local and national groups pushing their specific ecological agendas. In 1979 the Irish Wildlife Federation grew out of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy (formed in 1968), seeking "to broaden out to general wildlife issues instead of concentrating on bird life". Various individuals personified specific environmental causes. The preservation of broad-leafed trees became the obsession of Australian Jan Alexander and she formed CRANN in 1986. German Karin Dubsy fought to increase awareness of the state of Ireland's coastline—her Dublin Bay Environmental Group launched its Coastline survey in September 1987, followed by 'Coastline Europe' two years later. Both large and small Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGOs) quickly began to integrate with one another, and in November 1990 Deonoiobrithe Caomhantais (Conservation Volunteers Ireland) was established by 16 voluntary NGOs, including An Taisce, the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and others. In April 1991, following a conference at Trinity College, Dublin titled 'Women and the Environment: What can we do?', an Irish Women's Environmental Network was founded to empower women to act on the environment.

With all this activity it's impossible to quantify the impact the green movement has had on Irish society, significantly in the 26 Counties. An Taisce has certainly had the most impact, particularly in raising public awareness, yet former chairman Philip Mullally still

feels that "...we have not yet linked into the real needs of the country and its people." Likewise, David Hickie (formerly An Taisce's environment officer) feels that its influence has been "slow and gradual", rather than dramatic. He adds: "One could say that the strength of conservation organisations in any country is proportional to the problems experienced. Irish people still have a low perception of the environment compared with continental Europe, although it's gradually getting better." Jeremy Wates, Earthwatch's former co-ordinator, takes a more cynical view: "Not that many years ago, Irish politicians were not embarrassed to stand over bad environmental policies. The environment was simply not an issue. Then they began to be embarrassed but they did not do anything to improve the policies. The only thing they did was learn to talk green." But the public, if not the politicians, are environmentally aware. When asked in a 1992 Dublin government survey if the protection of the environment and problems of pollution were "an urgent and immediate problem; a problem for the future; or not really a problem at all", 76% of the general public and 91% of companies said it was an urgent and immediate problem.

When Fine Gael's Jim Mitchell stated that the green movement was "very active and articulate with lots of sensible ideas" he was repeating a general belief, but the Progressive Democrats echoed another sentiment—that the public perception of the green movement is that it is "well meaning but idealistic".

There has been a strong argument that the green movement will not evolve if it continues to use established social, economic, legal and political modes of activity. But the argument in support of small, local and autonomous green groups working outside the system, which first surfaced during the anti-nuclear campaigns in the mid-seventies, did not immediately find favour with the myriad green and eco-community groups spread around the country. While some groups have remained small and anarchistic, others have formed into regional alliances, like the Cork

**SmithKline Beecham
Cork Harbour**



"We're being poisoned and the state doesn't care."

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Environmental Alliance and the Derry/Donagall Alliance, which, according to some critics, has diluted their power. It has given them a combined regional strength, which they have used to their advantage, but it has also given them the same headaches as the national NGOs: lack of funds, inadequate resources and few professional full time workers.

The ideal that concentrated power lies with a mass green, social movement developing outside traditional parliamentary politics, which also was first expressed during the anti-nuclear campaigns, has to a degree been shattered. An example of this has been the relative failure of anti-toxics campaigns of recent years, which brought back some of the same activists involved in the anti-nuclear campaign. In her 1990 study of the Irish ecology movement, Sue Baker argues that the anti-toxic movement remained "nebulous" and because of this was unable to develop "to successfully launch campaigns of opposition to industrial development strategies for their area. Lacking a national organisational dimension, longer-term and planned goals, being reactive rather than primarily pro-active in nature, they are in a weak position in terms of their ability to influence the direction of a national industrial development policy so rooted in the ideology of all the main political parties since the 1950s".

Since she wrote this there has been much change and no change at all. The anti-nuke movement is resting on its laurels, convinced it has won the war. The anti-toxic movement has become fragmented, with only the Cork Environmental Alliance a force to be reckoned with by local government and industry. Those concerned with conservation and cultural heritage have become soft and complacent, believing that by raising the green agenda to a higher level of prominence they have achieved their aims. The alternative living types are no longer seen as hippies because nearly everyone under 30 looks like a refugee from Woodstock, albeit with nothing more than a superficial awareness of green issues—and I don't mean the increase in vegetarianism and veganism. The animal rights people have been vocal and violent on occasion, but without a focus for their anger—that is, why the ruling élites and power brokers need to be taken out instead of the fox—they have made no real impact. In general the organised greens have taken their place in capitalist society, believing they are contributing to the debate about ecological destruction.

In essence, environmentalism in Ireland has been one big game played out by people with bourgeois sensibilities, liberal politics and careerist ambitions—the winners being those who gain enough points to acquire

a ticket to ride on the capitalist machine. Defending the earth was never going to be easy. Now at last, in a rude awakening for Nuala Aherne and friends, it is no longer a game or even just political theatre.

Notes

1. When I refer to Ireland I mean the 32 counties, though this essay is based largely on the history of the green movement in the 26 counties (aka Eire or the Republic of Ireland) and less so on the 6 counties (aka 'Northern Ireland').

2. Merck Sharp and Dohme arrived in Ballydine in county Tipperary in the mid-70s against a background of inadequate planning and pollution laws, giving insufficient enforcement and compensation. In 1976 their factory opened. Two years later local farmer John Hanrahan began to complain about pollution from the factory. Everyone ignored him and regarded him as a crank, even though his nightmare was obvious to anyone who took the time to visit his farm. From 1980, animals began to die of a strange wasting disease, cattle miscarried, twin births and deformities increased and milk yields dropped. The problems were not confined to the Hanrahans'; other farmers complained. Metal was seen to rust and corrode in the farmyards and houses closest to the factory.

The farmers believed that MSD was the problem, but Merck controlled virtually everyone and everything as far as the eye could see. Fortunately they didn't own the Hanrahans, who took them to court in 1982. Over the next 8 years, as they pursued the case all the way up to the Irish Supreme Court, they came close to financial ruin. They faced legal costs of £1m, their livestock and machinery auctioned off, and their water supply disconnected by the council, (the family having refused to pay rates until they could be guaranteed clean air.) "This is the valley of tears," Mary, John's mother, said after the settlement in December 1990, acknowledging the location of the farm in the picturesque Suir Valley in South Tipperary. "Our story was true, you see. We were very pleased that in the end we got, I suppose you could say, justice. But at what price? That is something none of us can say."

There has been a price and the Hanrahans and their neighbours are slowly paying it—irreparable damage to their health, as evidenced by a dramatic increase in cancers in their area. Seline Hanrahan, for example, has endometriosis, which has been identified with dioxin contamination. (A September 1991 appeal by the Hanrahan family and Greenpeace against an air emission licence granted to MSD was rejected.) Those who studied the Hanrahan case believe that the total

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cost to MSD was around £5m—but for a company that records its profits in billions it was a small price to pay. (During the court case they admitted that their profits from Ballydine amounted to £1m a week!) Barristers in Dublin have claimed that the Hanrahan family got a total of less than £1m in compensation. But the sum of money doesn't really matter; the price to the Hanrahan family is incalculable. The greater price is the effect on public opinion, which is exactly what MSD wanted to minimise when they placed conditions of secrecy on the settlement. These conditions helped to sweep the issue of health and toxic contamination back under the carpet—and draw a veil over the suffering of those in the "valley of tears". (Refs: High Court and Supreme Court records; documents held by O'Keeffe & Lynch, Molesworth St, Dublin D2; Interviews with Hanrahan family).

This essay is based on the author's own experience and is strongly opinionated. Anyone who wants references contact him via DoD, enclosing an SAE).

Irish Contacts:

Pobal an Dulra is a non-profit publication designed to empower people by providing them with information on eco-social issues. It needs donations to survive. Contactable via DoD or by email: diarmo@indigo.ie.

An Talamh Glas is committed to protecting Ireland's wild places, to encouraging communities to build eco-futures that serve their basic needs without detriment to the natural world, to gathering and disseminating information on all aspects of society which impact on eco-systems, to acting as catalysts for empowerment, and to asking people to wake up! This is not to suggest that we are misanthropic, but we certainly oppose the capitalist world's anthropocentric view of the nature. It is our belief, perhaps our philosophy, that the environmental problems of the 20th century have their roots in the hierarchical, authoritarian, bureaucratic and domineering structures imposed on society by ruling élites. We firmly believe that the core ideals current in eco-anarchism, eco-socialism, eco-feminism, eco-philosophy, social ecology, environmental ethics and deep ecology—although diverse in theory and application—offer realistic utopian futures in both rural and urban society. Wake up you lazy bums or you won't enjoy the third millennium! An Talamh Glas can be contacted c/o Pobal or by e-mail at: allenr@bluewin.ch.

Santry Woods, a mixture of native and tropical trees in north Dublin, is being threatened with destruction. Fingal County Council have voted for the re-zoning of

the majority of the 300 acre woodland so that developers can build apartments and offices. Once known as the Dark Wood, because it was so dense, Santry Woods contains groves of Spanish chestnuts, Californian redwood, Italian walnut plus hazelnut and cedar among its native trees. Preservation orders were imposed after a campaign in the eighties to protect the trees but the latest move by the council threatens all this. The Save Santry Woods Campaigners want to see the wood maintained and argue that as part of the regeneration of Ballymun, a nearby high-rise housing estate with drug problems and high long term unemployment, the woods should be turned into an organic farm and eco-centre. Monthly marches from Ballymun to the woods began in March. An open air concert in the woods will be held in the summer.

Ballyseedy is eight acres of pure woodland in Ballyseedy, north Kerry in the south west of Ireland. It will be destroyed if the local council are allowed to go ahead with their plans for an EU funded road. By all accounts, it is one of the dumbest, most unnecessary projects of recent times. For more information contact: James Kennedy, 33 Ashgrove, Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland.



Hot Dam!

Movement Mauls Maheshwar



The Maheshwar Dam was due for construction across the Narmada River in the state of Madhya Pradesh in Central India. The 400 megawatt project would submerge some 2500 acres of land and affect 2200 families in 61 villages, and is a part of the Narmada Valley Development Project; a plan to build 30 major, 135 medium and 3000 small dams on the Narmada River and its tributaries. The scheme has been assigned to an Indian textile company, S. Kumars, which is seeking help from transnationals Siemens and Asea Brown Boveri (ABB).

There has been ongoing resistance to the Narmada Project since it started and the most recent phase of this began on 3rd October 1997 when over 10,000 people demonstrated at the construction site of the Maheshwar dam. The people demanded a complete halt to construction and warned that they intended to launch a major campaign against the project if it was not halted by 31st October that year.

This did not happen and an occupation of the dam site by over 20,000 villagers started on 11th January 1998 when a "Village of Struggle" was established. On the 26th of the same month six people started a hunger strike demanding an end to the construction work. Because of these events the Madhya Pradesh state gov-

ernment invited members of the Save the Narmada Movement (NBA) to a special meeting of its Maheshwar monitoring committee on 15th January 1998. As a result of this on 30th January a halt to the project was called and, as the news of imminent victory spread in the villages, thousands of villagers started pouring into the occupation site and the crowd eventually swelled to over 8,000. At midnight an official came to the site and announced that the project was to be cancelled pending a review process. He brought written government orders compelling the Energy Department to stop work on the construction of the Maheshwar power house and dam as well as halting the land acquisition process.

People from all over India have hailed the importance of this victory, which is not only the first milestone in the fight against the destructive development symbolised by dams, but has also emerged as an important symbol in the on-going struggle against globalisation. The NBA has said that this victory was only possible because of the firm determination of the people to fight and the tremendous support they received from concerned people and organisations all over the world.

For more details contact: Bretton Woods Project, PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT, UK. Tel: 0171 523 2170.

Behind the BalACLavas

Breaking Bread with the Zapatistas



Zapatistas take over the Government's stage!

Armed with kilos of beans, grammatically incorrect Spanish, a sore head, my hammock and a sense of madness, I set off from San Cristobal de las Casas in the early hours of the morning to rendezvous with three other campamentos. Our reasons for crossing the 'front line' into Zapatista territory to live with the indigenous Mayan communities as International Peace Observers were as varied as we were. Katrina was studying social anthropology, I was interested in human rights and Sarah, well Sarah had quite simply fallen head over heels in love with the Zapatista spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos!

We had crossed each others' paths numerous times in San Cristobal, but the unnerving silence around the uprising and the string of informers used by the government had meant that we were all playing the "I'm only a tourist game". It wasn't until we met at the small independent Human Rights office, (the official governmental human rights organisation insists that there are few human rights abuses in Mexico), that we had

known who we could talk to. We had all gone to the training session on what to do if the Mexican army decided to launch a military offensive against the communities (namely flee into the mountains with the villagers). We had also been given information about the low intensity war being waged on Zapatista supporters, the militarisation of the conflict zone, and of the constant human rights abuses suffered by the indigenous communities.

The rules governing campamento work were strict. They had been drawn up in consultation with the participating villages. Your role was to monitor the federal army's incursions into the communities. You were not allowed to build up personal relationships with individuals in the community, nor impact in any way on their everyday lives, drugs and alcohol were banned, as was any party political material. Infringement of any of these rules resulted in your immediate expulsion from Zapatista territory. Five hours after our clandestine meeting outside San

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Cristobal, the four of us were sat in the back of a truck which was travelling rapidly down what seemed to pass for a road. The early morning mist was beginning to lift, around us was the Selva Lacandon, North America's last remaining tropical rainforest.

I cannot go into detail about how we were smuggled across the front line. Once in, however, a sense of calm that somehow defied logic took over. The others managed to grab some sleep in the back of the truck but I was too filled with a sense of awe to relax. I had read so much about the Zapatistas. They had dared to declare war on the Mexican government, the federal army, NAFTA, and neo-liberalism, and had challenged the first world to act on their demands. I knew that behind the sexy image of the masked men and women who had taken possession of five towns in the state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994 lay the hundreds of indigenous communities whose land I was now travelling through.

Driving deeper and deeper into the jungle we began to pass army camps and villages in quick succession. After three hours we were dropped in a village which had suffered severe reprisals after the 1994 uprising and again in February 1995, when the Mexican government launched its last big offensive. Our arrival caused a stir. The human rights organisation was desperately short of volunteers and the communities were getting nervous at the lack of international observers. Hands were raised in solidarity and a small welcoming party turned up to check our credentials and show us where we were to stay.

Five minutes after our arrival, a welcome of another kind cast a shadow over the chatter of the children who had appeared with a list of questions for us to answer. "What is going on?", I asked in Spanish. "The helicopters", came the reply. I was reminded of the film *Platoon* as a huge low flying machine began to circle the small gathering that had assembled outside the campamento hut.

As I was soon to discover, the children of the village had incorporated the military's presence into their everyday lives. The pictures they drew, of butterflies, dogs, flowers, horses and houses, were always framed by a helicopter and the sun in the background. But they also had an understanding of the fact that they were part of something much bigger.

Although the helicopter soon flew away, almost immediately the ground appeared to move, and out of the dusty haze I saw the first of many army personnel carriers on the dirt track road we had just travelled down. To say they were large is to somehow underestimate their size. They were rather like the JCBs at

Whatley Quarry, which I had clambered on months previously at an action in the Somerset hills in the UK. Somehow the desire to clamber up onto the army personnel carrier was not there! Direct action, Chiapas style, was something I couldn't participate in.

This was only the first of many villages Sarah and I were to stop at while en route to the community we were posted to, but it was from this first village that I took much of my understanding of just what the Zapatistas were about on a day to day level. For example, when we arrived the villagers were involved in preparing a vegetable garden. Everyone was working. All land in Zapatista territory is communal and food is shared out according to need.

However, before I go any further, I should explain the political background to the situation I found myself in. It is no coincidence that the initial uprising of the Zapatistas coincided with the advent of NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement, between Mexico, the US and Canada] at the beginning of 1994. Enshrined in the Mexican constitution drawn up after Zapata's 1910 revolution was the right to land for those who worked it. To ensure the passage of NAFTA into domestic law, the Mexican government scrapped the section of the constitution (Article 27) which guaranteed these land rights, thereby paving the way for commodification of the 'ejidos', or communal landholdings. Transnational companies from around the world have had their eyes on Chiapas for some time, and had been waiting for NAFTA to come into effect to start the process of exploitation. When Article 27 was removed, they thought they could begin the takeover of peasant land in earnest—but they had not bargained on the indigenous Mayan communities of Chiapas standing in their way.

The campesinos of Chiapas are under no illusions about what the pursuit of neo-liberalism means for their communities, their lives and the future of their children. They have had first hand experience of the destruction that is left behind when corporations choose to satisfy their desire for profit. For decades, even before NAFTA, natural resources were being drained out of the state, leaving poverty and death in their wake. The Mexican constitution states quite clearly that if the Mexican people feel dissatisfied with the government they have the right to rise up and remove that government. When Zapata drew up the constitution he was under no illusions that a perfect reality was assured. And it certainly has been far from perfect; the PRI ['Institutional Revolutionary Party'] has been in power for 75 years, growing ever more corrupt in that time, and it has fallen to groups such as the Zapatistas to remind them of this 'constitutional right'.

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For the Mexican people they have re-invoked the spirit of Zapata and the 1910 revolution. Their rebellion has spread to all corners of this vast country. Subcommandante Marcos states: "There will be no peace until there is justice."

After a decent night's sleep we said our good-byes to Katrina, who was to stay here. The federal army camp was less than 200 yards from her makeshift hut, and her mediation skills were to be needed on a daily basis. More personnel carriers thundered past; this road was the gateway to the jungle for the federal army. But we were not going to use the road. The communities we were headed for were in the heart of the jungle, far from any roads. Accompanied by seven men from the community we set off from the road into the mountains.

Walking through the jungle with our companions, I remembered a book which had described the events in San Cristobal on January 1, 1994. The arrival of thousands of indigenous Indians, armed and dressed in

black balaclavas, in this small colonial town located high in the mountains of southeast Mexico was met with disbelief by its inhabitants. It was New Year's Day, and most people had been drunk the previous night celebrating with friends and family. Individuals who brought news of the armed insurrection moving towards the town were told they had obviously swallowed the hallucinogenic worm in the bottom of their tequila bottles.

One of the Zapatistas' first moves was to round up the police officers on duty in the town and lock them in their own cells. By this time news of the uprising had begun to filter through to the army barracks nearby. When the head of the army phoned San Cristobal's police station to verify this information, Subcommandante Marcos answered the phone. He reassured the general, saying that all was quiet in the town, and told him not to pay too much attention to the ramblings of people today, he too had heard some bizarre stories. Meanwhile the Zapatistas had liberated the chemist shops, broken into the municipal building, (burning all the land sale records within), and had mounted armed blockades on every street corner. This was repeated in other towns across Chiapas. This story made me laugh many times on our gruelling trek in the Canyons of southeast Mexico.

On the afternoon of the next day Sarah and myself arrived at the village where we were needed. We had been smuggled past two army bases. Tense moments were all too frequent an occurrence in these parts. I had been studying the faces of our companions as they guided us silently past the huge army garrisons. One man saw me studying him and smiled as if to say 'you'll be OK.' We could see the federal army troops but they were oblivious to our presence.

Our hut, which was to be our home for the next three weeks, was equipped with a table, bench, open fire and cupboard. We were to share it with a variety of wildlife and countless strange and fantastic insects.

We caused an uproar in the schoolhouse when we walked into the village clearing. Our arrival coincided with the school break time. All the children flooded out to greet us, followed by a rather irate adult who realised that getting them all back in the schoolhouse to continue their Spanish lesson would take a momentous effort. The women of the village looked visibly pleased that the two latest campamentos were female. Within ten minutes Sarah was in a remarkably stressed state. "I cannot light the fire", she said, "And they are all looking at me." One of the men—a guy called Juan—announced that the last campamento had not been able to light a fire or cook his own food. He went on, "How

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are you people going to cope when there are uprisings in your own country?" Juan smiled. Sarah glared but I had already decided that I liked him. My experience on road protests meant that I was able to start the fire. Our first test was over.

That night, our little hut was full to the brim with men and young boys who were keen to find out everything about us. We talked for two hours about families, why we had come to Chiapas, what we were doing here without partners etc., before we got onto the topic of politics. The Zapatista communities are keen to find out about resistance movements in other countries and about the global resistance to neo-liberalism. They see their struggle in an international framework, but news is hard to come by in the jungle and the campamentos act as a tenuous link between them and the world at large.

I had told Sarah about the direct action movement in the UK, and she in turn told the entire village that I sat up trees and on pieces of machinery in my spare time. The men were confused! Did the army not shoot me out of the trees, they asked. I replied no, and added that most of the police in my country do not have guns, (although I am sure a few officers and security guards have had wistful thoughts about how much easier it would have been to clear the M11, Twyford, Newbury and the countless other protest sites with the use of a few 'armas', as they are called in Spanish.)

Sometimes we were arrested at these demonstrations, I told the men. The silence was complete. And you—have you been arrested, they asked. Yes, was the answer. More silence proceeded my reply. "But you are still alive." I'm not sure who was more shocked, me or them. There was no explanation from either party. I was slowly digesting the idea that being arrested in Chiapas meant that you stood a high chance of being murdered, and they were trying to come to terms with the fact that some strange gringo women came from a country where the police did not carry guns and people could survive being detained by the state. I explained that deaths did occur in police custody, but that they were not common place.

I slept that night in my hammock listening to the monkeys screaming. The next morning we found tortillas wrapped in cloth on

the kitchen table. The women had risen at four to grind the maize and cook tortillas, which formed the staple diet along with beans, coffee and bananas. 80% of campesinos are malnourished in this area of Chiapas, and yet the state is one of Mexico's main exporters of food. Chiapas also produces 55% of the nation's hydro-electric power and yet most of the indigenous people have no access to clean water, sanitation nor electricity. The state is a huge wealth generator for Mexico and yet it is the poorest in the country.

It took us two hours to make a cup of coffee on that first morning. We had to go and collect water from the stream which was down the side of a ravine, which took an hour. We discovered that chopping two pieces of wood each exhausted us, and trying to light the fire again frayed Sarah's temper. We were visited by the women after breakfast. Their company was very special. I could tell that for them to come into our living quarters was a momentous act. I was kicking myself that my Spanish was not better. They shyly asked questions which I didn't understand. Hours later, with the aid of my dictionary, I would grasp what they were asking. The words they used for things were colloquial, which didn't help, and some spoke their indigenous language, having as little confidence in their Spanish as I had in mine. I could only loosely understand their meaning by the context of the conversation. On one occasion I was talking about my partner. One woman asked if we used tablets. I was confused. Three hours later I realised that she was referring to contraceptives. When I saw her later down by the stream, I shouted out "The answer to your earlier question is yes." She laughed.



If I can't line-dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution.

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The communal approach to everyday life was an ideology I had spent much time discussing with others in England, but I was to see it working in fine detail here in the mountains of southeast Chiapas—and working well. The peoples' ability to act as a collective in all matters left a deep impression on me. I had expected to be overwhelmed by the communities but I had not expected the intensity or the depth of their effect on me. Their wisdom in all matters was so acute it seared me. I could only glimpse at their relationship with their environment and with each other through my eurocentric eyes; so much was just simply outside of my experience. When I asked about their decision to take up arms, Maria stated: "We were not happy about taking up arms but we had tried many peaceful ways and always we were killed and tortured. We had no choice ... We are fighting for peace, our land, dignity and our rights. We do not want war but we were at war anyway, with the government, with the landowners who took our land. We were dying anyway."

What many people know as the Zapatistas, "the men and women in balaclavas", is only a small part of the story. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) is the Zapatista Army. Behind the masked combatientes lie hundreds of indigenous communities and an organisational structure with roots deeply based in 2,000 years of Mayan tradition and culture, and in experiences of fighting against oppression and exploitation. The EZLN are under the control of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee [Oooh-er!] which is made up of elected representatives from each of the Zapatista communities or areas. The representatives are responsible for bringing all the proposals from the villages to the committee and vice versa. Everyone is consulted before any decision is reached.



We were visited daily by the children who came to draw pictures with the brightly coloured pencils we had brought. The campamento hut was soon filled with an array of drawings which we stuck to the walls. Resources such as pens, pencils and paper for the children were in short supply. The teacher who taught in the village school disappeared for two weeks to join a state wide demonstration protesting about the fact that many teachers in Chiapas had been on half pay for years. Corruption is so acute that money given for education and health care disappears. The village was also short of basic medicines. Hundreds die in this part of Chiapas alone from curable diseases.

The three weeks I spent in the Selva Lacandon passed all too quickly. I had grown strangely accustomed to the sight of helicopters armed with bombs flying over my head. On the previous day Sarah and myself had taken our last bath together with the other women down by the stream. On the way back we stood on the edge of the clearing and watched the children playing, some were climbing on the laps of any adult who happened to be available for a short nap or a cuddle. No sooner had Sarah turned to me and said "It's perfect here" than, less than ten seconds later, a federal army helicopter flew in low over the village green, causing the scene to shatter as people looked skywards and children stood motionless. Sarah and I looked up too. We could see the huge bombs attached to the side of the helicopter. For the first time I felt sick. The village had asked me to return but would they all still be alive in six months time?

On the night before I was due to leave the people of the community came to say their good-byes. My hand was shaken many times and I was told to take care and to travel safely. "Please come back, and learn more Spanish. There are many here who want to talk about politics with you, and find out more about people who sit up trees", stated Juan. I asked them if I could write about the community for the alternative press in the UK, and explained that I would not mention real names nor identify the village. 'Si, claro', was the response. ('Yes of course'). I was told to carry with me the force of the Zapatistas. I found leaving very difficult.

My return journey through the jungle was slightly quicker. I had acclimatised myself to the humidity, the blistering sun and the high temperatures, but I was far more nervous than before. On the way down the side of the mountains I was told to listen carefully. "El tigre", my companion whispered. I strained my ears but I could not hear the Jaguar's movements. "Is it close?" I asked. "No", came the reply. I arrived back in San Cristobal a day later.



Women in the Struggle

"We aren't going to ask the government to give us freedom, nor are we going to ask you male fools. We are going to ensure our freedom, our respect, and our dignity as women and as human beings." Quote from the women of the EZLN.

One of the first things you notice when you arrive in Zapatista territory is that women in the communities meet and hold your gaze, often responding with a smile to your Buenos Dias. (Good Day) To those arriving in indigenous Mayan communities in Chiapas this small detail may not seem like much to get excited about. But to understand the significance of this gaze you have to stop looking at the act through eurocentric eyes. For behind it is a story and a struggle for equality that has journeyed far in 10 years.

Women have been involved in the Zapatista movement from the start. They make up a third of the armed combatientes in the EZLN. Many hold positions of rank such as major and captain, and three outrank Subcomandante Marcos. The exploitation and oppression of women was one cultural tradition that the women involved in the Zapatista movement decided not to hold on to. They drew up what has become known as the Womens' Revolutionary Law. It demands that women be allowed to choose their husbands, be allowed to decide the number of children they have, have control over their body and its fertility, that women be respected, that the act of rape be punished, that women have the right to an education and to decide what type of work they do. The Womens' Law was translated into the five different indigenous languages in Chiapas and representatives went into all the villages to explain it to the many women who could not read.

The trickling down effect of these changes in cultural traditions on the communities is already visible. The confidence of the little girls and young women, and their presence in the makeshift school houses, is just

one concrete example. The fact that in the village where I stayed women in the community had a right to participate in meetings, spoke Spanish and held elected positions of responsibility was another. The older women tell you that much has changed in the last decade, but that there is still room for much more change. As the female combatientes come back to the villages with their partners to have children, they in turn bring back different attitudes.

In macho Mexican society it is very rare to see a man participating in any form of child care. In the Zapatista communities, men and boys were not only carrying small children and babies around but also comforting them. When I asked the women about this they laughed, saying women in the EZLN carried guns, in the communities men had learnt to carry babies.

Domestic violence had been epidemic in the indigenous communities prior to the 1980s, mainly as a result of the high rate of alcoholism. Drinking was encouraged by the ranchers and landowners, who regularly stole land from the campesinos only to employ them later as labourers. Wages were even paid in alcohol! Now, in all the Zapatista communities there is a notice as you enter stating: "No alcohol or drugs, only peace and maize." In response to a question about why women participated in the revolutionary struggle, Commandante Ramona explained: "Because, women are also living in a more difficult situation; because women are the most exploited and strongly oppressed, still. Why? Because women, for so many years, for 500 years, have not had the right to speak, to participate in an assembly. They do not have the right to have an education, to speak to the public, or to hold any position in their town.... We get up at three in the morning to prepare the corn, and from there we have no rest until everyone else is sleeping. If there is not enough food, we give our tortilla to the children, to the husband." (From: "Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution" Autonomedia, 1994, available from AK Press [See Reviews section for address.])

The women's movement in the communities grew simultaneously with the entry of women into the armed struggle. Major Ana Maria: "Women started to get together and organise themselves and they started to join the ranks of the army. And then other women did not join but organised themselves into womens' groups, women alone. And that is another way that women entered the struggle." (Ibid. p.238)

At the Encuentro, Eva, an indigenous woman from the Union de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata, based in Morelia in Central Mexico, reported that the example given by the Zapatista women had encouraged other

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indigenous women in Mexico to start organising in women only groups. Eva stated: "When we occupy land we do not call this a land occupation but a land re-occupation because the land belongs to us in the first place. When the soldiers come to evict us from our land the men hide behind the women. Sometimes the women get arrested, but the other women who remain demand a car to go to the local prison and release the arrested women. Us women are getting very good at this."

The EZLN has led the way in the demand that women be treated with equality but the struggle even amongst the combatientes has been difficult. Subcommandante Marcos states: "Many times in our daily lives as combatients, in couple relationships, sexist attitudes are reproduced and because of this our laws tend to favour the women." He added; "The government doesn't like the fact that the indigenous people have risen up but we did it. The sexists don't like the fact that the women are doing what they are doing, but they are doing it and that's that." Attitudes and traditions have been slow to change but the indigenous women of Chiapas and Mexico are demanding and ensuring their right to be respected.

All quotes from the main article were taken from personal interviews by the author in Zapatista communities. Quotes not referenced in the Women in the Struggle article were also from personal interviews.

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"We want all who walk with the truth to unite in one step" - Subcommandante Marcos.

"Ya Basta"—the Zapatista war cry, which translates into "enough is enough", has resonance for resistance movements throughout the world. The words and actions of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas have inspired millions, but the Zapatistas are clear about the fact that they do not want to sit on a pedestal; they believe their struggle is part of a global awakening. The recent Second Intergalactic Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism proved them right. Thousands of grassroots activists from across the world gathered together in Spain last August to discuss the development of a global network of resistance.

We heard from direct action movements across five continents, as representatives from the Ogoni in Nigeria, farmers' unions in India, combatientes from the EZLN, landrights delegates from the Philippines, Bolivia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Peru, Assam, Nicaragua, Sem Tierra from Brazil, activists from the US, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, and from RTS and EF! in the UK, told of the struggle against neo-liberalism. Those of us who attended this conference from the UK want to build not only on the links we made but also on the dreams we shared. The network is in its infancy but as capitalism goes global so too will we.

Cabinet Stoned on Constitution Day

What was to have been a peaceful February 5 ceremony to celebrate the 81st Anniversary of the Mexican Constitution in Quere'taro —birthplace of the 1917 document that crowned the Revolution— turned into a street brawl in which demonstrators hurled stones at members of the Mexican Cabinet. According to news accounts, those in attendance dutifully observed protocol, yawning and pasting smiles on their faces. It was, after all, just another anniversary of the Constitution. Everything appeared to be sailing smoothly until the so-called "legal cabinet" was met by a hailstorm of stones upon leaving the area. The protesters were members of the Independent Front of Zapatista Organisations (FIOZ). Their anger had initially been directed at the PAN [one of the main opposition parties

to the PRI] government in the state of Quere'taro, and they wore Ku Klux Klan-style hoods that read "Ku Klux PAN". But after half an hour, the protests suddenly shifted focus to being against government policy in Chiapas, demanding that the Army exit Chiapas and the government renew its dialogue with the Zapatistas. FIOZ members hurled rocks at the buses which transported the dignitaries. Considerably sized rocks smashed bus windows to pieces while members of the presidential security team shielded cabinet members with their bodies. Shortly afterwards, riot squads attacked FIOZ members. [There is some speculation that 'FIOZ' might be "fake Zapatistas"—a front for the PRI; Mexican politics is a very murky business—go figure...]

Murder in Mexico

On December 22nd 1997 a new atrocity was perpetrated against the indigenous peoples of Chiapas. The low intensity war turned to slaughter. 45 people (including 21 women and 15 children) were murdered, and many more wounded, in Acteal, Chenalho province.

This was the climax to months of persecution, in which Zapatista civilians were chased out of 14 communities, had their houses burnt, their possessions stolen, and their land allocated to their tormentors by local authorities and the ejido police!

The killers are PRI-ista paramilitaries, from a group called Peace, Justice and Development. They were armed by Felipe Vazquez Espinosa, regional police chief who told investigators that he received orders from above. Paramilitary Groups are financed by local ranchers, the President of Chenalho province, the Governor of Chiapas and others. There is evidence that the government has a policy of fostering the growth of paramilitary groups in Chiapas and other states in Mexico.

This is part of the classic American 'counter-insurgency' strategy (as outlined in a US Defense Department 'Plan for Chiapas' in October 1994)—a strategy which is manifesting itself in death-squad massacres and 'disappearances' all over Mexico under the cover of the 'war on drugs'. As of early January, around 9,000 people were crowded into 3 refugee camps. With only makeshift shelters and lacking water, firewood and medicines, they are hungry and cold, and young children are dying in the harsh conditions. Many people have been injured and diseases are rampant. A further 2,400 people were still trapped in their communities, surrounded by paramilitaries.

On January 1st 1998, the Mexican federal government sent 5,000 more troops to Chiapas, adding to the 35,000 already there. (By late February troop numbers had increased to 73,000.) Ostensibly, they are to assist the Mexican Department of justice in investigating the massacre, and apprehending those responsible. In practice, operations are being directed against the EZLN, with Morelia and La Realidad—sites of the 1996 Encuentro—under siege, peasants tortured and questioned as to the whereabouts of Subcommandante Marcos, and personal possessions ransacked. These operations are

even being undertaken in conjunction with the same paramilitary groups, whose well-known members walk free in towns elsewhere in Chenalho. In some cases unarmed women have been fighting with the army, setting up lines of defense to prevent them from entering their villages and refugee camps. Between the 22nd December and 14th January, in a fantastic wave of international solidarity, there were at least 230 actions in 27 countries. 100,000 people marched in Mexico City, along with thousands more in Spain and Italy.

On Jan. 12, as people around the world protested the Dec. 22 massacre police opened fire on a march of 5,000 Tzotzil and Tzeltal Indians in the Chiapas town of Ocosingo. Police killed Guadalupe Mendez, shooting her in the stomach. They wounded two small children—including the 3 year-old daughter Mendez was carrying in her arms.

As one refugee puts it: "The PRI-istas are happy thinking that they have our things. They are laughing already. They think that they have won, now that we have all left. I think not, my friends. You are going to return, we are going to return to our community. We are without homes, without blankets, without everything, but we want to live. What we want is help to return to our homes, that the PRI-istas aren't left laughing. Our only fault is our organisation, our party, that we are Zapatistas. All we want is a little help from you who can give aid in each nation and in each state. Together, we are not just two or three, we are a mountain of people, we are many."

The struggle continues!



House ransacked by paramilitaries

Direct Action Down Under

Outrage in the Outback, Battles in the Bush



Australian Native Title

The issue of Native Title could be said to be the most contentious one in the country, currently, and may well get top billing in the next election. In 1992, (a little late to say the least) the Mabo High Court decision reversed the long-standing assumption of 'terra nullius': that Australia was empty and belonged to no-one before white people turned up. The court spoke of Native Title as the common law rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, which confirmed the legal status of their customs, traditions, and laws.

This led to Native Title Claims—indigenous people claiming the right to practice those traditions on land leased by pastoralists. The Wik decision made by the High Court in 1996 found that pastoral leases (long standing leases of grazing land from the government, covering in total 42% of Australia) and native title could co-exist in the vast majority of cases. If they did conflict, however, the rights of the pastoralist leaseholder would prevail. The Howard government has responded to this decision, approved of by indigenous

Australians, with the outrageously racist Amendments to the Native Title Bill. The reason for this becomes clear when a list of pastoralists affected is looked at—mostly *not* ordinary farmers, but rather an incredibly small handful of very powerful people, including media baron Kerry Packer, the Sultan of Brunei (!), developers and some MPs. No doubt the last thing they wanted to have to do was consult traditional owners about development on 'their' leaseholds.

Howard's amendments would allow the State governments to upgrade most pastoral leases to the equivalent of freehold, so Kerry Packer and mates, rather than the Australian public, would suddenly own a very large portion of Australia, and native title could no longer be an issue. There would be no native title rights over rivers and waters, and no protection for them. There would be no option for Aboriginal people to have a say in what happens to their land. Unlawful mining licenses would be validated. The final insult is that for any possible claim left, Aboriginal people

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would have to prove continual physical access to the land—when countless numbers were forcibly removed from it.

Nelson Mandela recently offered to help mediate on this issue. John Howard, who says his amendments offer a middle ground, apparently located between some mythical pastoralist who wants to shoot everyone who isn't white, and the radical leftist High Court, turned this offer down. But Native Title has made it into the global spotlight, and it is to be hoped that with an upcoming election and a large number of Australians who value Reconciliation too much to let it be irreversibly damaged, Howard's amendments will be halted and the Native Title Act protected.

Update on Native Title, December 8.

After a week of debate, it's been made clear that several of the clauses in the Native Title Amendment Bill will not be accepted by the Senate—most importantly the discriminatory clause that throws out the Aboriginal right to negotiate about the use of traditional land. If a Double Dissolution occurs (the Senate rejecting the Bill twice) John Howard can, and has said he will, immediately call the Federal Election...and with the lies and scare tactics used by politicians against Native Title, an election based on racial issues is a very worrying prospect for Australia.

Jabiluka: Leave the Uranium in the Ground

Kakadu National Park, in the Northern Territory, is listed as a World Heritage site. It contains ancient rock forms, amazing waterfalls, wetlands, diverse flora and fauna, rock art dating back thousands of years, and last and certainly least, the Ranger Uranium mine, owned by Energy Resources Australia. Politicians like to play word games about the mine "not being in the National Park at all", but when you hear of a protest against the mine that involved delivering hundreds of doughnuts to Parliament House, you'll have some idea of the shape the National Park just happens to be. The land destroyed by the mine is at the very heart of Kakadu.

And now, the government plans to allow another mine in the area—Jabiluka. Clearly to do so would be a further act of environmental vandalism. ERA's mining at Ranger gives a good idea of what to expect at Jabiluka—a leaky dam of 40 million tonnes of radioactive waste surrounded by walls that will last a mere 1000 years, compared to the waste itself, which will be radioactive for 25000 years, plus the regular release of contaminants into the local creek.

The Mirrar people, traditional owners of the area, are unanimously opposed to this contamination of their

home. Yvonne Margarula, Senior Traditional Owner, says: "My father was forced to sign the Ranger agreement in 1975. Our people were given no choice in the Jabiluka agreement—and all Australians will lose if mining goes ahead in the Park."

Australia contains 80% of the world's uranium, which ought to be seen as a huge responsibility. Senator Parer, the Minister for Energy and Resources, in approving the mine, managed to say with a straight face "Nuclear energy is environmentally a good idea since it doesn't contribute to global warming." A pilgrimage against uranium that covered much of Australia earlier in the year involved several activists who know better—they were from Chernobyl.

Earlier in the year, campaigners travelled to Kakadu to meet traditional owners. Since then, there have been anti-uranium rallies in most capital cities, and the Senate has passed a vote against mining at Jabiluka, which is nice but didn't stop approval going ahead. Mining may begin mid-1998, and environmentalists say the ensuing blockade could be the biggest thing since the Franklin Dam.

Forests

After a three year process known as the National Forest Policy, Australia's precious native temperate, sub-tropical and tropical forests and rainforests are facing liquidation via "Regional Forest Agreements". Under these RFAs, all quotas on export woodchips will be abolished in favour of market forces. In exchange for the predicted clearfelling frenzy, the federal and State Governments are supposed to put in place a "Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System" to protect all remaining forests that are not to be logged.

Surprise, surprise! The first two RFAs signed to date (East Gippsland in Victoria, and the entire State of Tasmania) have been worse than inadequate. Shady last minute deals have seen entire old growth forest areas handed over to the forest industry, with inadequate "rocks and ice" reserves in exchange.

In Tasmania high conservation value forests and rainforests in the Great Western Tiers, Southern Forests and the Tarkine are now more threatened than ever, destined to be logged to provide woodchips for the likes of Mitsubishi and other Japanese pulp and paper companies. Australia exports over six million tonnes of woodchips to Japan annually.

Tree sits, blockades and tripods are likely to be popping up wherever the Howard Government (yes! we remember Kyoto, too!) signs off on the next RFA.



Forest Massacre Looms: a Case Study

Many people around the district are expressing the view that with the signing of the Regional Forest Agreement the forests of the Western Tiers, NW Tasmania are safe. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. As I write, some of the area's most popular tourist destinations are being—or are about to be—clearfelled out of existence. These include forests that are immediately adjacent to popular walking tracks, such as the Meander Forest Reserve (next to the World Heritage Area), Western Creek (adjacent to Higgs Track) and Mother Cummings Peak (Scotts Rd).

In addition to timber industry lobby groups, the Aboriginal Community and Conservation organisations participated as "stakeholders" in the "RFA" process. It was truly inspiring to see the amount of energy that committed local people put into the process. A majority of submissions to the RFA process were generated in this region, almost all of which argued for increased protection, not tokenism. We all really believed that our economic arguments were being taken seriously; in particular that tourism was an important "sunrise" industry which required high conservation value forests to be protected in order to allow indigenous cultural tourism and nature-based tourism to flourish. In the last few days of negotiations all this hard work was sacrificed on the altar of political expediency and increased woodchip exports. The money that we had lobbied so hard to secure for an interpretation centre—\$1 million—remained, but the very forests we had argued needed to be protected were handed back to the likes of North and Boral. [Two of the biggest Australian logging companies—David Bills, the current head of the Forestry Commission in the UK, used to work for North.]

In the end we were given the inaccessible scraps at the top of the Tiers, and our aspirations—especially those of the Aboriginal community—were cruelly dashed. The idea of a jointly-managed conservation reserve for Kooparoona Niara, or "Mountains of the Spirits", was a far-sighted concept, and one that had the potential to make the tourism appeal of the Meander Valley completely unique in Tasmania. What is the value of an interpretation centre when there will shortly be no forests left to interpret?

A major concern to all of us who lobbied for increased protection was the future of Mother Cummings Peak [the most notable peak in the Great Western Tiers], and in particular a forest "coupe" that Forestry and North have been trying to log for over two years: HU 307. Situated at the very end of Scotts Rd on

a high bench at 850 metres, the forest is truly magnificent, a source of inspiration to countless people. The area contains tall, dry Whitetop forest, which has never seen an axe, and is interspersed with delicate sphagnum moss beds and King Billy pines—relicts from the last ice age. Mountain Warratahs add a vibrant splash of colour in season, and an all-year-round creek flows over mossy boulders. I have to admit that I fell in love with the place, and I have been taking guided walks in the area ever since access to Pine Lake became restricted due to dieback. I have now led over 190 clients through the area, and they are all of the same opinion: that logging such a valuable asset is sheer madness.

Scotts Road provides the quickest access to the Central Plateau World Heritage Area of any of the tracks at the western end of the Tiers. In just 40 minutes you can get to breathtaking views—so long as you avoid looking down onto the horror show of North's plantation logging. On the ascent, the Scotts Rd forest occupies the main viewing field, and after about twenty minutes you can see it spread out in all its majesty below you. Imagine the reaction of some of my clients when I tell them that all they can see is going to be carted off on a log truck!

The Minister for Forests assures me that all will be well once it is logged. However, I would point out a couple of things that he seems determined to ignore. The forest is very high, and has an open canopy. The "Shelterwood" logging regime and burn that is prescribed will be akin to clearfelling at this altitude, and will severely endanger the swamps and King Billy pines, which are fire sensitive. Forests this high simply don't regenerate after logging. The so-called "reserve" put in place for the swamp and the pines is too small to protect anything, and will be cut in half by a new spur road anyway. Furthermore, there is a major landslide immediately adjacent to the bench, just 40m below Scotts Road—a road that will shortly be taking heavily-laden log trucks. All this sounds like a recipe for disaster to me, but then again I don't have the woodchip industry as my constituency.

There is such little old growth forest left on the Tiers after twenty years of clearfelling that I believe that neither we—nor the old-growth dependent species—can afford to lose one of last major environmental assets. I have been to Canberra three times in an attempt to secure its protection. Eventually I managed to gain a stay of execution. Under the "Interim Forest Agreement", the Commonwealth and State

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Governments agreed to defer logging while considering its value for inclusion in the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative forest reserve system promised under the RFA. Imagine my horror and disgust when I found out that the Bessels Rd bench (which has been completely logged and is now riddled with landslides) was included in the reserve but HU 307 was not!

It is not that HU 307 did not deserve protection. It contains old growth forest of a type that was not adequately protected in the RFA, and is an important tourism resource. In fact, the RFA "Steering Committee" even visited the area and marvelled at the Sphagnum swamp. I believe the area was done a great disservice by those people who marched in Deloraine. [A march of wise use and extreme right-wing scumbags.] It gave the State government the excuse that it was looking for, and it was withdrawn from protection. It is not as if there is not enough logging going on already. Meander Valley is now criss-crossed with new logging roads and Private Timber Reserves as a result of the RFA.

Soon the fate of Mother Cummings will be sealed forever. It is not too late to act now, however. Please write to or ring both the Premier and Minister for Forests. Sample letters are available if you need some help. Please make a donation to the ongoing peaceful efforts to protect this wonderful place. For further information please ring: 03 6369 5102. Please stand up for the forests while they are still standing.

For more information, and to help, please visit the Native Forest Network Website: www.nfn.org.au

For a more detailed insight into direct action down under, check out the excellent new EF! Action Update Australia: EF! AU, PO Box 12046, Elizabeth St, Brisbane 4002, Queensland, Australia.

Street Parties in Sydney!

Feb 22nd 1998. Over three thousand people took part in Sydney's second Reclaim the Streets Street Party. Three sound towers were erected playing a variety of sounds as police diverted traffic around the recaptured Crown St. in Darlinghurst, central Sydney. Police reacted in a much more relaxed manner at Sydney's first Street Party on Nov 1st, 1997. In solidarity with the Oxford Reclaim the Streets Sydneysiders took police by surprise and partied in Enmore Rd, Newtown, central Sydney. Two thousand people danced, played cricket and watered a permaculture garden which had sprung up in the previously congested roadway. A banana tree, comfy chairs and two modified cars with the engines taken out (one painted to look like a tank and adorned with anti-Shell slogans) also made an appearance. The police were surprisingly cooperative, even saying that Enmore Rd should be pedestrianised permanently! Street parties are planned for Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle later in the year...

Critical Mass

Critical Mass takes place in eight Australian cities every last friday of the month... Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, Newcastle, Sydney, Canberra, Wollongong. Numbers vary according to seasons and general energy. One and a half thousand is the highest number of people thought to have come together for the organised co-incidence of Critical Mass.... Melbourne '97. General estimates of numbers of participants vary around the country from 20 to 700.





Thanksgiving is for Turkeys

Amerikkka Celebrates Genocide

"We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever."

- United American Indians of New England.

Thanksgiving Day is the essence of America, one of the cornerstones on which the USA rests its pride. Not surprising then, really that it is celebrating genocide, and will use brutal force to silence those who try to expose the lies that surround it.

NOV. 28, 1997 - An annual American Indian gathering in Plymouth, MA on Thanksgiving Day turned violent when police confronted a group of Indians trying to march through the historic district of town. Reports vary in the number of protesters involved, indicating that anywhere from 100 to 200 members of the United American Indians of New England were present for a peaceful National Day of Mourning. Witnesses said that the group was set upon by police after the media left, and were beaten and gassed. Twenty-five of the group were arrested. Among those who were beaten were elders like a 70 year old woman and a 97 year old man. They face charges of disorderly conduct and unlawful assembly, police said. Some witnesses indicate that mace was sprayed directly into the faces of some Indians.

Earlier in the day a group of historical re-enactors dressed as pilgrims had marched through the area to

commemorate the first Thanksgiving without incident. When some of the Indian demonstrators tried to argue that they had a right to freedom of speech and assembly as well, they were beaten for their trouble.

Thanksgiving:

A National Day of Mourning for Indians

Every year since 1970, United American Indians of New England have organised the National Day of Mourning observance in Plymouth at noon on Thanksgiving Day. Every year, hundreds of Native people and our supporters from all four directions join us. Every year, including this year, Native people from throughout the Americas will speak the truth about our history, and about current issues and struggles we are involved in.

Why do hundreds of people stand out in the cold rather than sit home eating turkey and watching American football? Do we have something against a harvest festival? Of course not. But Thanksgiving in this country—and in particular in Plymouth—is much more than a harvest home festival. It is a celebration of the pilgrim mythology.

According to this mythology, the pilgrims arrived, the Native people fed them and welcomed them, the Indians promptly faded into the background, and everyone lived happily ever after.

The truth is a sharp contrast to that mythology. The pilgrims are glorified and mythologised because the circumstances of the first English-speaking colony in Jamestown were frankly too ugly (for example, they turned to cannibalism to survive) to hold up as an effective national myth. The pilgrims did not find an empty land any more than Columbus "discovered" anything. Every inch of this land is Indian land. The pilgrims (who did not even call themselves pilgrims) did not come here seeking religious freedom; they already had that in Holland. They came here as part of a commercial venture. They introduced sexism, racism, anti-lesbian and gay bigotry, jails, and the class system to these shores.

One of the very first things they did when they arrived on Cape Cod—before they even made it to Plymouth—was to rob Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill



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and steal as much of the Indians' winter provisions of corn, beans, and wheat as they were able to carry. They were no better than any other group of Europeans when it came to their treatment of the Indigenous peoples here. And no, they did not even land at

that sacred shrine called Plymouth Rock, a monument to racism and oppression which we are proud to say we buried in 1995.

The first official "Day of Thanksgiving" was proclaimed in 1637 by Governor Winthrop. He did so to celebrate the safe return of men from the Massachusetts Bay colony, who had gone to Mystic, Connecticut to participate in the massacre of over 700 Pequot women, children, and men.

About the only true thing in the whole mythology is that these pitiful European strangers would not have survived their first several years in "New England" were it not for the aid of Wampanoag people. What Native people got in return for this help was genocide, theft of our lands, and never-ending repression. We are treated either as quaint relics from the past, or are, to most people, virtually invisible.

When we dare to stand up for our rights, we are considered unreasonable. When we speak the truth about the history of the European invasion, we are often told to "go back where we came from." Our roots are right here. They do not extend across any ocean.

National Day of Mourning began in 1970 when a Wampanoag man, Wamsutta Frank James, was asked to speak at a state dinner celebrating the 350th anniversary of the pilgrim landing. He refused to speak false words in praise of the white man for bringing civilisation to us poor heathens. Native people from throughout the Americas came to Plymouth, where they mourned their forebears who had been sold into slavery, burned alive, massacred, cheated, and mistreated since the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620.

But the commemoration of National Day of Mourning goes far beyond the circumstances of 1970. Can we give thanks as we remember Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who was framed up by the FBI and has been falsely imprisoned since 1976? Despite mountains of evidence exonerating Peltier and the proven misconduct of federal prosecutors and the

FBI, Peltier has been denied a new trial. Bill Clinton apparently does not feel that particular pain and has refused to grant clemency to this innocent man. [See Prisoner section for contact details.]

To Native people, the case of Peltier is one more ordeal in a litany of wrongdoings committed by the U.S. government against us. The media in New England present images of the "Pequot miracle": a small Native Nation in Connecticut who run the most successful Native casino in the country, and make a ton of money from it. The problem is that while some non-Native people now assume that all Native peoples are making big bucks from casinos, the vast majority continue to live in the most abysmal poverty.

Can we give thanks for the fact that, on many reservations, unemployment rates exceed fifty percent? Our life expectancies are much lower, and our infant mortality and teen suicide rates much higher, than those of white Americans. Racist stereotypes of Native people, such as those perpetuated by the Cleveland Indians, the Atlanta Braves, and countless local and national sports teams, persist. Every single one of the more than 350 treaties that Native nations signed has been broken by the U.S. government.

The bipartisan budget cuts (enacted by Republicans and Democrats alike) have severely reduced both educational opportunities for Native youth and the development of new housing on reservations, and have caused deadly cutbacks in health-care and other necessary services. These cuts primarily target social welfare programs while the corporations get richer every day. Poor people, elders, immigrants, people of colour, women and children have felt the greatest impact from this assault on the poor. Many states are literally throwing people off welfare and telling them that they have to find a job. [Sound familiar?!] The problem is that many jobs do not pay enough for people to survive; further, in many areas (e.g., rural Indian reservations), there are no jobs to be found. There are increasing numbers of homeless families.



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Are we to give thanks for being treated as unwelcome in our own country? Or perhaps we are expected to give thanks for the war that is being waged by the Mexican government against Indigenous peoples there, with military aid from the U.S. in the form of helicopters and other equipment? When the descendants of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca flee to the U.S., the descendants of the wash-ashore pilgrims term them "illegal aliens" and hunt them down.

We object to the "Pilgrim Progress" parade and to what goes on in Plymouth because they are making millions of tourist dollars every year from the false pilgrim mythology. That money is being made off the backs of our slaughtered indigenous ancestors.

Increasing numbers of people are seeking alternatives to such holidays as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. They are coming to the conclusion that, if we are ever to achieve some sense of community, we must first face the truth about the history of this country and the toll that history has taken on the lives of millions of Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian, and poor and working class white people.

The myth of Thanksgiving, served up with dollops of European superiority and manifest destiny, just does not work for many people in this country. As Malcolm X once said about the African-American experience in America, "We did not land on Plymouth Rock. Plymouth Rock landed on us." Exactly.

Why did the cops attack a peaceful march? Why did they drag a Native man by his hair when they arrested him? Why did they arrest a peaceful Native elder and medicine person? Why did they intimidate and assault other elders? Why did they attack children with pepper spray? Why did they tear out the dreadlocks of a proud Black Man? Why did they arrest people who were standing on the sidewalk? Why did they force pepper spray into the eyes, noses and mouths of people who had already been handcuffed? Why did they single out people who wore buttons and T-shirts expressing support for Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier? Did these cops go home afterwards and stuff their faces with turkey? Did they sit down with their own families after they had attacked our families? Did they give thanks for keeping Plymouth's 377-year-old tradition of racism intact?

The most sickening part of what happened is that the police attack was executed simply to protect the sacred image of the pilgrims and the sacred image of Plymouth as a tourist shrine. The cop assault was planned and carried out simply to protect the tourist

industry in Plymouth. The bottom line is not the safety of women, children, elders and other people, but the protection of business interests. The human and civil rights of people of colour—and especially of Indigenous people—are expendable when money is to be made or tourists might be inconvenienced. The police assault has backfired in their faces. They have shown in graphic detail the truth of what we have been saying all along. Did we attempt to destroy their precious property? No! Did we threaten or attack a single person? No! Our "crime" was to speak the truth about our history. Our "crime" was to attempt to go down the street like free human beings. Our "crime" was to support Leonard Peltier and other political prisoners. Our "crime" was to unify people from all four directions, to bring them together to denounce the pilgrim mythology upon which the tourism industry in Plymouth depends.

We point out to all the media here that the responsibility rests not only with the town of Plymouth but with various state authorities. Massachusetts state troopers played a leading role in the cop assault on innocent people. It was clear to us and to other observers that the cops had been trained in so-called counterinsurgency tactics and had been training for some time. There were also plainclothes cops there from unknown agencies. Who were they? What agencies did they represent?

We ask that our supporters be on alert and stand by, because we will be planning additional actions, and something for next Thanksgiving too!

UAINÉ are asking for support from around the world. Let the government know that the world is watching. Send letters of support.

Contact:

UAINÉ
PO Box 7501
Quincy, MASS, 02269
USA



Global Round-up

Dutch actions at Schiphol

Vereniging Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands) kept a KLM plane on the ground when 13 activists climbed on a plane ready to depart for the United States. The activists were protesting against the continued increase in flights at Schiphol which is not in line with environmental standards the government set earlier this year. After three hours, the activists let the plane go and were arrested.

Contact:

Paul de Clerck

Friends of the Earth Netherlands

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Thailand

A coalition of Thai environmental groups has halted the construction of a controversial natural gas pipeline for the second time, after several herds totalling 50 wild elephants were driven from their habitat in lush forest by pipeline construction. Scores of activists are camping along the pipeline route to stop the forest destruction, and thousands more attended a rally in Bangkok on February 1st. The US\$1.2 billion pipeline is a joint project of Unocal of the US, Total of France, the military junta of Burma, and Thailand's Petroleum Authority (PTT). According to activists, the Thai Army has moved 200 soldiers into the area, and the demonstrators fear that they will encourage a confrontation (Rainforest Relief Press Release, February 12, 1998).

March 6, 1998: Internationally-known Buddhist social critic Sulak Sivaraksa and some 50 activists have now been arrested and taken from the forest. Some 20 police officers took away the activists, thus ending the nearly 3-month camp protest. The last forest strip the protesters have been trying to protect by risking their lives in front of bulldozers is to be destroyed. Streams which are home to rare species like the Rajini crab will be infilled. The charge against Sivaraksa is 'preventing PTT officers as well as others involved in any project of petroleum development from performing their

duties,' as stipulated in the Petroleum Act, a special law which protects the PTT's petroleum operations.

Contact:

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Sri Lanka

Farmers are vehemently opposing a proposed phosphate mine near the town of Eppawala that will be run by US-based Freeport McMoRan Resource Partners, IMC Agrico and Japan's Tomen Corp.

"We will not leave, the government will have to use soldiers to remove us from our homes," Mahamannakadawata Piyarathana, President of the Committee for the Protection of Phosphate Deposits at Eppawala, told a news conference last week. Piyarathana, a Buddhist monk in the region, says that more than 40,000 villagers who have lived there for over 2,000 years will have to be relocated under the US\$450 million project, which will also include a fertiliser plant, most likely in the eastern port city of Trincomalee.

The environmental impact of phosphate mining in Florida, where three-quarters of the United States and one quarter of the world's phosphate output is mined, has been significant. Freeport and IMC-Agrico are the major mining companies in this region too. Over 200,000 acres of this southern state have been strip-mined, leaving behind land that looks like a car race track after heavy rains, filled with pits and gullies and mini-mountains of dirt and thousand-acre slime pits. Some 20 stacks of phosphogypsum, a waste material from phosphate mining, that tower ten stories high and occupy 400-600 acres, dot the Florida landscape.

In the past this waste was simply dumped into local waterways but today this practice is banned by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) because phosphogypsum has been shown to contain elevated levels of radium which eventually breaks down into radon, both radioactive gases, and there are no safe methods to store or treat the waste. Studies

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have shown that cancer rates in phosphate mining areas of Florida are three times higher than those in unmined areas.

Another impact of this mining is a major increase in mosquito populations in the pits and settling ponds created by the phosphate mining industry, which become infested with water hyacinth and water lettuce, attracting large populations of mosquitoes. Fertiliser production also poses major safety problems because of extremely frequent explosions involved in the mining process.

Philippines

On January 22, 1987, 13 peasant demonstrators were killed and scores were wounded when the military trained their guns on demonstrators during a massive rally at Mendiola Bridge that demanded genuine agrarian reform. Ironically, the peasants were brutally massacred at the time of the Aquino administration [which followed the Marcos dictatorship] which had declared agrarian reform as the centrepiece of the government's programme. And eleven years hence, justice has still eluded the victims of the Mendiola massacre.

Worse, not only did the agrarian reform program prove to be a sham, but the insignificant number of farmers who did actually benefit are currently losing their lands as a result of the land use conversion programme of the present Ramos government.

In the service of foreign and local big business and landlords, thousands of peasants are being violently displaced from the land they till. This bitter struggle for land results in atrocities.

A case in point is the ordeal of the peasants of Golden Country Farms in Occidental Mindoro. This land dispute—between the peasants and the Quintos family—dates back even to the years before Martial Law. When the Aquino administration declared its "commitment" to agrarian reform, the peasants moved to register the lands they till. But the Quintos family was able to block the registration in favour of its claims to retake the land.

The land dispute between the farmers and the Quintoses has caused the murder of Marcelo dela Cruz, a farmer, on July 10 1997, and Balbino Fernandez, a peasant leader who was killed on December 23 of the same year. Ten farmers have been arrested and detained for 9 months, and 4 have been arrested after the man-hunt for the killers of the Quintos brothers Michael and Paul. Fear and uncertainty have beset the inhabitants of Sitio 38 and Sitio Budburan. For fear of the military's brutality, the poor peasants have fled their homes.

Eleven years after that fateful day in Mendiola, the conditions have not changed for the peasantry. In fact, they have worsened. The denial of social justice, and the state violence directed against the peasantry, is intensifying. For as long as the land problem persists, the struggle for genuine agrarian reform rages on, and the cries for justice of the Filipino peasantry continue to haunt the nation's consciousness.

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France

"Towards Car-Free Cities" is just the beginning.

Lyon—Have you ever had to dodge speeding cars while scurrying across busy streets? Been angered by the amount of urban space occupied by cars? Mourned the loss of a car victim? Noticed a loss of community to destruction of nature and sprawl?

You're not alone. A movement of activists has formed to liberate cities across Europe from cars. At a conference they called "Towards Car-Free Cities," this international movement came together for a first-time fusion of ideas, experiences and culture. The results from such an event of course can never be predicted or expected.

They gathered above the cobblestone streets of old Lyon at the end of October—65 activists representing 50 groups from 21 countries. The seven days were filled with movement-building meetings, workshops and a public day of round-table discussions and debates; they shook France's second largest city with three protest actions that kept the conference on the television news every day of the week. So if you thought conferences are where experts and academics talk at you in monotonous from a podium all day, guess again.

The goal was to strengthen the international car-free cities movement, allow activists within it to exchange skills and information, and to launch ongoing cooperative international projects.

"Towards Car-Free Cities" hit heavy even in the Norwegian, Hungarian and Polish papers, maintaining press coverage until over two weeks after the conference ended. It was then the front page of *Le Monde* screamed, "Citadins de tous les pays, unissez-vous contre la dictature automobile!" ("Urbanites of all nations, unite against the automobile dictatorship!").

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Cars Ticketed, Walked Over, Bounced And Bannered

The mid-week action developed into the ultimate in experiential workshops: under the rising Wednesday morning sun, participants broke into four groups. One hung a banner, "Assez d'autos" ("Enough cars") above a crowded mid-town motorway during the morning rush hour.

A second group marched over cars parked on the pavement, led by Munich's infamous car-walker, Michael Hartmann. After walking over each car, they attached a sign to the windshield: "I walked over your car because I didn't want to slide under it!"

The group later wrapped cars in red and white police ribbon, leaving on the dashboards "official" letters, explaining rationally why society can no longer bear the costs of private car ownership. The letters concluded by giving drivers a choice: pay the true costs of your car with a hefty fine of 100,000 francs, or have it crushed in exchange for a free bike.

Some cars were actually picked up off the pavement by a dozen people and set down in the street, rendering it too narrow for cars to pass. The dislocated cars were then ticketed by police, which strengthened the message of the "car bouncing" action.

The third and fourth groups swarmed over the city distributing flyers that at first glance appeared to be adverts, but turned out to be asking drivers to get rid of their cars. "Offer to Seize Immediately," they read. The most successful leafletters donned tutus, painted their faces and stood on stilts at traffic lights. Drivers smiled and waved, anxious to get something for free. Many even stopped at green lights, arms astretch, just to receive the "offre à saisir immédiatement."

A First for France—Reclaim the Streets!

Friday, November 1, meant participants had to outdo what they had accomplished with Wednesday's actions. But Friday also happened to be the "Day of the Dead," kicking off the weekend with the most automobile fatalities of the year.

The week before, organisers had found a small orange car, dubbed 'the Pumpkin', and veiled it in black for the occasion. Just before 2 pm on the Friday, conference participants pushed the Pumpkin to the front of the opera house, there joined by a growing, mourning crowd of local Lyonais.

The Day of the Dead is a serious affair in Catholic countries; to be respected and honoured. A few hundred people donned black garb and processed through the streets, singing funeral dirges and dragging the old car through the city centre. "L'auto, ça pue, ça tue et ça

pollue" ("The car, it stinks, it kills and it pollutes"), they sang solemnly, to the delight of bystanders.

Also dressed in black was a ten metre long banner that read, simply, "L'auto, c'est la morte" ("The car is death"). A funeral dirge of the same slogan, wailing from an amplified sound system, echoed off the walls of the eight-story buildings. Death herself, complete with black cape and evil grin, had mounted the now-shrouded Pumpkin, and headed the procession slicing the air with her scythe.

At a busy street, with narrow pavements crammed with people, the procession stopped. The undercover cops were powerless to prevent the poor dead Pumpkin from being dragged across the street.

Several people hoisted three 15 metre long metal poles, which had been inconspicuous under the Pumpkin's black veil, off the roof of the car, and set them up as a tripod to block cars at the opposite end of the street. A climber from Dijon then occupied the eight metre high tripod perch.

Bar the black and red ketchup-splattered people dead on the road, a festive atmosphere ensued—with acoustic music, bunting, stilts, leaflets, paint-stenciled symbols and flowers, of course. Even brand new bike lanes instantly appeared on the street, just before the drum beats and sunlight diminished.

What Now? What Next?

Above all, "Towards Car-Free Cities" built unity and understanding among European car-free cities activists. Most importantly, participants got to practice these skills in real-life situations. Attesting to the success of the conference, informal talk of a second "Towards Car-Free Cities" has already begun, possibly to be held in Tallinn, Estonia.

The projects launched at the conference are in various stages of development: The car-free magazine details are being decided in time for a spring premier issue, the full conference proceedings will be finished mid-January, the video is completed, an international day of action against the automobile may happen this summer in collaboration with Reclaim the Streets London, and the Lyon centre to coordinate these projects is keeping the ball rolling while presently preparing its badly insulated office for the winter.

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Galicia

Launched by the FEG (Galician Ecologist Federation), an unequal battle is developing between ordinary people and their civic groups, and the rightist Galician government and the big corporations that back it; an unequal battle between the voices of people and the media lobbies supporting big business.

Galicia is an autonomous region in the North West of the Spanish state, 30,000 square kilometres in area with a population over 3 million. To 'solve' the problem of our municipal solid waste (800,000 tons a year), which until now has been dumped in various illegal landfills, they have projected a big management plan to burn the waste in a factory close to La Coruna City.

Over the last two years, large amounts of propaganda have been thrown to trick the general public with lies such as: Compost is no good for the soil, recycling is environmentally unsafe, Origin Waste Classification is not healthy, incinerators don't pollute, Galician people are not prepared for recycling strategies, etc. Always the newspapers, radio and TV are acting as the mouthpieces for government and corporate interests.

The work of environmental groups, trade unions and leftist political parties obtained the support of 50,000 signatures to present a legal plea to our autonomous government, and to launch a very popular campaign

for the recycling of solid wastes. Demonstrations, seminars, concerts, exhibitions, school programmes, meetings and other activities have been performed all over the country, trying to stop these ecocidal plans.

But the voracity of electric corporations and the banks is not going to permit the citizens to stop this big business (worth \$300 million), and they have changed their strategy. Now they favour recycling, and their firm is called SOGAMA (Galician Society for the Environment)! They are calling the incinerator an "Energy recycling facility" in order to deceive public opinion and get the majority in the next regional elections. They are using the support of a "scientific committee" from the University of Santiago, consisting of university teachers who finance their research with money from the corporations who are building the incinerator. The debates between Galician ecologists and "scientists for incineration" show how the official science is able to act against people and environmental interests.

The enemy is strong but the fight goes on!

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The things we do to earn money.



In the Dungeons of Fortress Europe

Thought Police imprison Green Anarchists in UK

The case of the "Gandalf Six" has enormous implications for those engaged in direct action, and for those giving favourable coverage to such actions. I think it's fair to say that the Gandalf trial was not just engineered to convict and imprison six assorted editors, activists and spokespeople. It was also intended to intimidate the wider movements in which they work—primarily the animal liberation movement but also the environmental direct action movement. Obviously, the intimidation also extends to the peace movement and any other struggles using direct action, nonviolent or otherwise. We are concerned, and we are meant to be worried.

The Very Short Story

The "Gandalf Six" were all arrested in January 1996 as a result of a massive police operation entitled "Operation Washington". All six were charged with "conspiracy to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage". Several of the defendants had never met before, and some of them had very tenuous connections.

The six were: Paul Rogers, Stephen Booth, Noel Molland and Saxon Woods—editors, contributors and distributors of, to and for Green Anarchist (GA); Robin Webb, press spokesperson for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF); and Simon Russel, editor of the Animal Liberation Front Support Group (ALFSG) newsletter. Hence the name, Gandalf (GAandALF).

The charges against Robin Webb were dropped before the trial, on the grounds that some of the evidence relating to him had been used against him in a previous case (the 1995 Winchester egg contamination trial).

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) are appealing this decision, and Robin might have to face a trial sometime in 1998.

The trial of the "Gandalf Five" began on August 26th 1997 at Portsmouth Crown Court before Judge

Selwood, a judge with strong military connections. On the first day of the trial, the jury, defendants and their representatives were excluded from the trial so that the Judge and prosecution team could argue about Public

Interest Immunity Certificates—the withholding of evidence and/or witnesses on the grounds of "public" (i.e. state) interest.

Paul Rogers was severed from the trial halfway through, due to a mutual parting with his solicitor and barrister. He faces another trial, perhaps as early as April 1998.

The trial finished on November 13th. The jury found Simon Russel not guilty, but convicted the three remaining defendants—Noel Molland, Saxon Woods and Stephen Booth. They were sentenced to three years in prison. The main arguments against the Gandalf Six...Five...Four... were that they had engaged in giving favourable coverage to illegal direct action,

and, in the case against those associated with GA, had distributed written resources which could help people commit illegal direct action. The Crown Prosecutor argued that such coverage and distribution amounted to incitement, and that all six...five...four had conspired





to thus incite. Probably the main reason Simon was acquitted was because the ALFSG always gets its magazine checked by a lawyer before publication. Such carefulness probably impressed the jury.

Why was this trial initiated?

The Big Issue has suggested that the trial was primarily an attempt to nail Robin Webb, ALF press spokesperson. Robin has been subjected to an enormous amount of police harassment and various trials—including one following the planting of a sawn-off shotgun in his car boot. The Big Issue suggests that the other five were used to net the big catch, Robin.

Yet Operation Washington cost £2 million, according to one estimate, and involved nearly sixty raids on bookshops and properties around the country. This doesn't look like an operation to get just one man. The main concern of the police seems to have been the continuing coverage of animal rights direct action, with Robin Webb, the ALFSG Newsletter and GA being the main conduits for such information. If they could close down Robin Webb and these two publications, perhaps they hoped that they could starve the animal rights direct action movement of the 'oxygen of publicity'. A second, perhaps subsidiary aim appears to have been to intimidate the wider direct action movements, in particular their journalists.

Defendants are divided over the extent of MI5 involvement in the case, although the issuing of Public Interest Immunity Certificates and an admission by DSI Thomas, in court, that MI5 were involved, shows that it wasn't just some parochial Hampshire trial. Some activists point out that Hampshire Police have a long-running vendetta against direct actionists in general and would be quite capable of running a show like this under their own steam; some say that Hampshire Police were fronting for ARNI (Animal Rights

National Index—Special Branch's anti-animal liberationist/environmental direct action wing); others suggest that it's a result of a panicked competition between Hampshire Police, Special Branch and MI5—all worried about jobs, resources and establishing reputations as "direct action busters". Whilst such speculation is interesting, and any emerging evidence should be widely distributed, I worry that there's a danger of getting caught up in the excitement of speculation, and miss the more vital issues. After all, even though potentially very immobilising, such massive state interest can also be distractingly gratifying.

Implications

This case has shown that elements of the state are capable of imprisoning editors and activists solely on the basis of the written word—and primarily on the basis of perceived favourable coverage of alleged illegal direct action. That the six accused were not some coherent group, that some of them had never even met each other, that their politics varied wildly, that they didn't all get on with one another—despite all this, the Crown Prosecutor and Judge were able to convince the jury that three of them had acted in conspiracy. And now they are doing three years.

Where was the outcry?

There was very little mainstream coverage of the trial, verdict or sentencing. The alternative/independent/radical press were also a little late to the scene—with the Oxford Alternative Media Gathering statement put out in September being the first significant concerted and coordinated act of solidarity. I think one of the problems was that Green Anarchist is a slightly marginalised paper within the movement, and people may have felt that in supporting the defendants they were supporting the politics of the magazine. Such confusion wasn't and isn't helped by some of the mate-



rial coming out of the Gandalf Defence Campaign, which tends to mix up polemic with possible facts, and revolutionary calls with concern for civil liberties. But, even so, support for the defendants was poor and we should be ashamed. It wasn't difficult to see the issues and implications, and the literature from the Defence Campaign did make it clear that, if they could be tried, any of us could—that solidarity and self-interest were entwined. Stephen Booth, from prison, lists some of the publications which were referred to during the court case: Terra-ist, Bolton Evening Noose, Land & Liberty, Arkangel, Animal Liberation Primer, No Compromise, Do or Die, Green Anarchist, Liberator, Smashing the Image Factory, Without a Trace, Partizan, Kerosine (Yugoslavia), Underground (Canada), Berkshire Wood Elves, ALFSG Newsletter, Smoke & Whispers, Cement Cross, Urban Attack, No Comment, Devastate to Liberate, By-Pass, New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society Newsletter, The Power is Ours, Anarchy in the UK, Lancaster Bomber, Against All Odds, Keep it Spikey!

Have you ever been involved with any of these in any way? Do you know any of the editors of any of the above? Have any of the editors of any of the above ever contacted you, even in an unsolicited manner? There but for the grace of the Hampshire Constabulary go you.

I think the mainstream press might have responded with more civil libertarian horror at trial, verdict and sentences had there been a more dispassionate and non-polemical defence campaign around the case. And if there had been more visible and vocal support from the wider movements. There is still time to rouse such liberal wrath.

Revolution or Liberty?

Part of the confusion in the Gandalf Defence Campaign has come about through a deliberate wish to promote the revolutionary politics of Green Anarchist. This is a valid option, but should be clarified, so that

people can choose whether or not to support on those terms.

It would also have to have the agreement of the current defendants and prisoners, and, from correspondence, I suspect that they would not be able to agree on a unified revolutionary line.

I think the best way to campaign around this case is to make the freedom of the press the main issue. This issue could unite revolutionaries, liberals and even some conservatives. It is the issue which the London Gandalf Support Campaign (separate to but supportive of the Gandalf Defendants' Campaign) is mobilising around, especially through their "Solidarity Pledge". I think, given this emphasis, the decision to burn an effigy of Judge Selwood outside the court during the most recent hearing for Paul Rogers and Robin Webb (2nd February, Portsmouth Crown Court) was a big mistake.

What would winning look like?

"Winning" this struggle would involve: getting the cases against Robin Webb and Paul Rogers totally dropped; getting the three prisoners out through a successful appeal—and up until that time, ensuring that they all receive excellent support; the radical media continuing to support, cover and argue for direct action; the powers-that-be not attempting another trial like this. All four outcomes are possible, and depend, to a great extent, on our ability to mobilise good quality support—broad, non-sectarian, well-argued and international. Even if we fail to win through the legal processes, good prisoner support and the continued exercising of press freedom will help to negate this significant act of state intimidation.

Contacts:

For Noel, Saxon and Steve's prison addresses see 'Prisoners of War' section in this issue.

Gandalf Defendants' Campaign, PO Box 66, Stevenage, SG1 2TR, UK. Tel: 0956 694922.

Pledge Of Solidarity

- We call on all publications to fairly report the Gandalf case and the issues involved.
- We pledge our solidarity with the Gandalf defendants, and call for the 3 jailed editors of Green Anarchist to be freed and for the outstanding legal actions against the 2 remaining defendants to be abandoned.
- We pledge to throw our weight behind the campaign to support the independent and radical press, and to defend the freedom to report news of direct actions and protests.
- We pledge to report news of direct actions and protests whenever and however we see fit, and we will resist any attempts to censor journals or organisations which exercise such freedoms.

Please photocopy, add your name here:

**Return to: London GANDALF Defendants' Support Campaign
Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP, UK.**

EUROPOL

Last year's Police Act armed British police with the legal tools to break n'enter an individual's home with bugging equipment and burgle their property. This legislation opened a new surveillance rule book for police intelligence gathering operations—with a mandate for Special Branch, CID, NCIS [National Criminal Intelligence Service] and NCS [National Crime Squad] to move into old MI5 waters. The individual targets of these intelligence fishing expeditions now covers anyone "pursuing a common purpose". That's the whole of the direct action movement and the Hampshire YMCA covered in one statutory sentence.

Uncoincidentally, in the same year Europol police were granted free operational rein to investigate anyone "pursuing a common purpose". Sound familiar... Security Services Act¹, Police Act, now European police? Yes, they are after the common people with a common purpose.

Since 1994 the secret EC K4 committee has built Europol from being a drug intelligence unit into the new European FBI. From monitoring and filing data on drug smugglers, Europol police now have the power to investigate any case of terrorism, illegal immigration and subversive activity. At an international gathering of intelligence agencies in Cambridge last September, its Deputy Director said Europol was a "blank page for future law enforcement".

Cross border operations, intelligent data policing and surveillance tools are being mobilised by Europol and the Schengen² member states to build a new Europe-wide electronic fortress. In France 60% of all police vehicles now have mobile data termi-

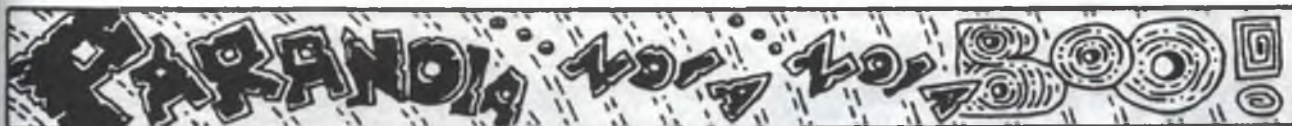


nals linked to both Europol and Schengen databases. If a Belgian peace campaigner is pulled over in Paris, then their license plate number can be scanned against these databases to identify the individual and make a record of their movements.

In Europol, European ministers and intelligence chiefs are creating a secret, unaccountable and powerful operational body to police the new European super-state. Already, Europol officers carry their own diplomatic immunity passes. They cannot be prosecuted for corruption by national justice courts, and are only open to discipline by the Agency's director.³ In Europol's Hague HQ, they are busy feeding information into their own databases, which can be accessed by national police forces across Europe. Again though, the core database will not be accessible by anyone save Europol. No data protection checks exist to monitor what goes in. Stored information could be anything from criminal records to DNA samples to telephone networks.

Police operations Europe-wide are increasingly being conducted along lines of information technology. "Intelligent policing" is currently being employed by

law enforcement agencies from Interpol and Europol, to NCIS and Kent police. A typical "intelli-



gent" operation uses covert Closed Circuit TV cameras to spy on an individual's home. The footage is then converted into data (people entering, car number plates), analysed against other data (criminal records, DSS), and then screened for patterns. Any raid or bugging operation can be planned with this analysed information in mind—selecting the prime time to mobilise any action.

Intelligent policing was operational throughout Euro 96—with briefs, analysed data and records being sent from country to country on individuals and potential trouble spots. The common link of football hooliganism with the Public Order Intelligence Unit (POIU)/Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) [See "The Empire Strikes Back", Do or Die No.6] brings us back to the direct action link. Given the amount of intelligence gathering, notetaking, visual surveillance etc—it is likely that this analysis will be used to plot DIY networks, actions and campaigns. Intelligence held on European activists and multi-national actions like those at Gorleben and the mobilisation against the EU Conference in Amsterdam (June 1997)⁴, may increasingly be collected on Europol and Schengen databases. Likewise, cross border operations might combine local, national and European police officers.

Still, it is important to remember that this police data driven technology is still in its infant stages. The more misleading, inaccurate personal information the better. With electronic data trails flowing from your bank account details, DSS, phone billing information etc, it is important to think anonymous, think imaginary identities. The more data they have to handle—the more time they have to spend untangling it behind a computer screen. On European trips you are only obliged to carry a passport, so leave anything with addresses, phone numbers, contacts at home. Being outside Schengen, English activists travelling in Europe cannot be identified through their database—but may have details logged for future reference. Again, keep it inventive and keep them guessing. By training the eyes and ears just one step ahead of the game it's not impossible to be the ghost in the system.

TREVI

Europol has been developed out of an earlier body with an absolutely priceless title: 'TREVI', or "Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and Violence International" (a name to die for!) Set up during the height of the Euro-terrorism wave in 1976, it was a coordinating network for the Interior Ministries of Europe. At first explicitly political in focus, it later expanded its remit to include Europol's other two areas

of 'expertise'—drugs and immigration. (Thus, as various commentators have pointed out, it reinforced the racist tendency to criminalise all immigrants, associating them with the entry of drugs and violence into an otherwise 'pure' Europe.)

For further information on this and other abuses of state power in the UK and Europe, contact:

Statewatch

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e-mail: statewatch-off@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Privacy International

c/o Justice?

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Notes

1. Passed just before the notorious Police Act, this legislation redefined the security forces' objectives, expanding their focus to take in those legendary groups who are "pursuing a common purpose". The effect of both Acts is to enable a greater convergence between the security forces and the police, with the former now integrating themselves much more into ordinary policing operations. Thus they can now have a role investigating seemingly mundane matters such as dole fraud, with the added bonus of being even less accountable than the conventional police.
2. The Schengen agreement rose out of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and obliges those states that have signed up to it to share 'law enforcement' information. It provides a basis for much more extensive joint policing operations—for example, there are plans to link up the police radio systems of all participating states onto the same bandwidth.
3. Given that they have this immunity from prosecution, it is worth noting that the only division of Europol in operation so far is the Europol Drugs Unit (EDU). The EDU has the rather tasty power of permitting "controlled deliveries" of drugs (33 were recorded in 1996), in order to protect its informants. An interesting indication of where such powers might lead (especially when coupled with Europol's immunity and lack of accountability) is provided by the behaviour of the Dutch police in a similar situation. Their policy on "controlled deliveries" allowed £1.5 billion worth of drugs into Western Europe, and resulted in a hilarious incident in which Dutch police had to explain that 1.5 million E's seized by British Customs at Sheerness were nominally their responsibility. An enquiry into the whole scandal concluded that it was hard to tell whether the police were "fighting organised crime or a part of organised crime". (Source: Observer, 14/12/97.)
4. Many of the demonstrators at the Conference were held under Article 140 of the Dutch penal code—that is, accused of being "members of a criminal organisation".



Radikal

Before Green Anarchist, the German magazine Radikal has weathered a storm of repression stretching over 16 years. In spite of this they have managed to continue publication, developing an impressive underground production/distribution structure which operates largely outside state control.

Beginning in 1982, 20 homes, bookstores and printing shops were raided on the pretext of prosecuting Radikal for "supporting a terrorist organisation". Following these raids, 2 alleged editors were given sentences of 2½ years each for their involvement with the magazine. (They evaded prison only by election to the European Parliament as Green MEPs!) In 1986 a further 100 homes and shops were raided. 200 cases were initiated as a result, with 5 people ultimately awarded suspended sentences of up to 10 months. In 1989 the repression extended beyond Germany's borders for the first time, when a Dutch publisher was harassed for printing an interview with Radikal.

In June 1995 the German government finally went the whole hog and declared Radikal a "criminal organisation", and the magazine "entirely criminal content" (!), under the infamous Paragraph 129 of the German Constitution. This is widely applied against political groups, particularly those on the left. Another 50 addresses were raided, some on suspicion simply of distributing Radikal, and 4 people imprisoned. Interior Minister Kanther even admitted that "the action was an aimed preventive measure designed to deter the left-radical scene." More 'deterrents' were in evidence later in December when a 5000 strong demonstration in Hamburg in solidarity with Radikal faced 4000 cops, and 100 people were 'preventively arrested'.

The battle moved into the virtual arena in September 1996. When the German authorities tried to shut down Radikal's website, numerous 'mirror sites' (reproducing Radikal's contents) were raised all over the world, defiantly circumventing the attempted censorship.

Finally, the repression went trans-European once more. In December 1996 German and Dutch police raided an alleged Radikal journalist in a Dutch border town, even though Radikal is not illegal in Holland!

Nonetheless, Radikal endures, providing a space for discussion of alternative visions, and of the varied ways in which we might realise those visions. We desperately need that space (as they say, "We need an uncontrollable resistance media!"), and we can draw practical lessons and inspiration from their struggle to keep that space open.

Italian Anarchists

On 17th September 1996, 300 members of the ROS (special squads of the Carabinieri) raided 60 addresses all over Italy. This operation followed earlier raids against anarchists in November 1995, and was based on breathtakingly dodgy evidence from a young informer. Manipulated by senior Prosecutor Antonio Marini (on record as saying "I want to arrest a gang of terrorists before I retire"), the informer has been used to establish the existence of a mythical armed gang called the 'O.R.A.I.', or "Revolutionary Anarchist Insurrectional Organisation".(!) By arguing that the 'terrorists' are sheltered by the movement's legal milieu (such as the squatted 'social centres'), the state seeks to criminalise the entire Italian anarchist movement.

The charges arising from the Sept. 17th raid range from "subversive association" through to robbery, manufacture of weapons, murder, kidnappings, bomb attacks and sabotage—basically, pinning most of the unsolved crimes of recent years on anarchists. At the pre-trial hearings in May 1997, Marini's megalomania reached new heights as he sought to add new charges, relating to the mere presence of the anarchists on the Internet and use of their media (particularly the newspaper 'Canenero' or 'Black dog') to publicise the trial. Arrests and deportations in other parts of Europe, notably from France and Spain, have also been a feature of this witch hunt.

The 'O.R.A.I.' has been portrayed as a rigidly hierarchical organisation, with long-time anarchist writer and activist Alfredo Bonnano the sinister 'Godfather' sitting at the top of the pyramid. Much of the prosecution's case was built around his supposed involvement. However the trial of the 58 accused (which began 20th October 1997) inexplicably continues—even though Bonnano has since been exonerated.

While the trial is an outrageous politically-motivated travesty in its own right, it also has wider implications. As with Europol, Europe is increasingly united not just economically but in its crackdown on dissent; if "Italian justice gets through with this and the anarchists get sentenced this way of action by the law will have its way not only in Italy but in other countries of the EC as well." (Breakout, December '96.)

For further information and solidarity:

CDA ['Anarchist Defence Committee']

c/o El Paso Occupato

via Passo Buole 47

I-10127 Torino

email: elpaso@ecn.org



CS Gas: How to combat the effects

Brief history

CS is an abbreviation for O-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile. The properties of this compound were first discovered by American chemists in 1928, and the potential chemical warfare uses were suggested by a Dutch writer in 1934. During World War Two scientists in various countries studied the effects of the compound but it wasn't seriously developed as a weapon until the mid 1950's. The first widespread use of it was during the Vietnam War and since then it has remained a weapon in the arsenal of armies and police forces the world over.

The Effects of CS Gas

The canisters that are carried by the police in the UK contain three ingredients: the active chemical (CS), a liquid solvent to dissolve and carry it, and an inert gas to act as a propellant for the spray. The active ingredient, CS, is one of a group of chemical compounds called lachrymators. These chemicals are tear producing agents, hence the euphemism 'tear gas'. Exposure to them causes severe eye irritation, a profuse flow of tears, skin irritation (especially on moist areas of the body) and irritation of the upper respiratory tract, causing sneezing, coughing and difficulty in breathing.

Protection

- The obvious thing is to wear a gas mask and they are available, although expensive. (The only ones worth using are current military or police designs—don't try any old ones you may come across in markets or army surplus stores as many used asbestos in the filters!)
- A mask and hood offer limited protection and of course they are well worth wearing for disguise anyway. An improvement on the normal cloth mask is a special cycle mask as they contain activated charcoal which will filter out some of the CS.
- Goggles are useful for eye protection and are easy to get hold of and carry.
- Carry a bottle of solution made up from water and sodium metabisulphate (sold as Campden tablets used in home brewing) as this combination neutralises the effects of CS. If you cannot get this use clean water to rinse the eyes and skin affected.
- If you are asthmatic tell the people around you before the action starts, so that if when sprayed you have a bad reaction they'll be able to act appropriately by giving you your medication or getting a doctor.

What to do when sprayed

- If you are in the line of spray move backwards out of range rather than sideways where the spray may still be able to reach you. If you are in a building move outside. Your eyesight may become blurred and it is easy to lose awareness of what is going on. Do not run blindly into the arms of the police, or worse still, into traffic. Act calmly and stay aware of your surroundings whilst moving to a safe area.
- If possible stand upwind of where the spraying happened and expose the affected part of your body to the wind. This will help disperse the gas quickly.
- Flush the affected area of the body with the solution mentioned earlier—or just water if this is not available. Do not touch it as you will spread the chemical around and rub it into your pores. It may be possible that you can rejoin the action right away, as small amounts should only affect you for a few minutes.
- When possible have a cold/lukewarm shower (hot water opens the pores and allows gas particles in) as soon as possible. Showers flush the chemical away whilst a bath will just re-distribute it.
- After the action you should hang your clothes up in a well ventilated area to disperse the last remnants of the gas. When they have hung for a day or so wash them twice—firstly in cold and then secondly in hot water—and they'll be okay to wear again.

CS Gas is fat soluble so never coat your skin in petroleum jelly or similar substances for protection as some people have tried. When sprayed do not treat the area with any cream, jelly or ointment, unless advised to by someone who knows what they are talking about. The best treatments are air, cold water and time.



PRISONERS

"Until all are free, all are imprisoned!"

We believe all prisoners are inside for inherently political reasons, as both the concept and the reality of justice and punishment are political and central to the functioning of this system. Sadly we can only cover a fraction of those inside, so for practical reasons we are limiting it to those imprisoned for their involvement in ecological, anti-nuclear/military, animal liberation, anti-fascist/racist, anti-state and indigenous people's struggles. We apologise to the people we have missed off the list—please let us know of any alterations for the next issue.

For more comprehensive listings and details we urge readers to contact the specialist prisoner support groups listed at the end of this article. Prisoner support is one of the most important aspects of political activity, and one of the most neglected, so read the listings below, get in touch and help out with their work, donate money or do whatever you can, but most of all, remember: 'Write to a prisoner—not your MP!'

Prisoners in UK prisons

Dave Callendar HV3314, HMP Birmingham, Winston Green Road, Birmingham, B18 4AS. ALF prisoner who's had his ten year sentence cut by two.

John Wesley Davis CH4539 (Inverness John), CH4539, HMP Altcourse, Fazackersley, Liverpool, L9. Sentenced to 12 months for offences relating to an incident at the anti-Manchester runway camps.

Albert Dryden CK0635, HMP Frankland, Durham. Serving life for killing a council official and wounding a cop and BBC reporter when they came round to demolish his house because of planning permission.

Michael Green AV2923, HMP Ashwell, Oakham, Leicestershire, LE15 7LE. Serving 5 years for arson at a slaughterhouse and attempted arson of cattletrucks.

Barry Horne VC2141, HMP Bristol, Cambridge Road, Bristol, BS7 8PS. ALF activist sentenced to 18 years for arson at various places on the Isle of Wight and attempted arson in Bristol.

Keith Mann EE3588, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs., WR11 5TZ. ALF activist serving 11 years for criminal damage, attempted incitement, attempted arson, possession of explosive materials and escaping from custody! (Has support group - see below.)

Noel Molland CK4321, HMP Channings Wood, Denbury, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6DW. Saxon Wood CK4322, HMP Guys Marsh, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0AH. Steve Booth CK4323, HMP Lancaster Castle, Lancaster, LA1 1YL. All three are editors of Green Anarchist magazine and have been sentenced to 3 years for 'conspiracy to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage' by publishing reports of direct action. (There is a growing tide of support for these three writers jailed for reporting direct action. See article on page 129 of this issue of DoD and also the GANDALF support groups below.)

Saptal Ram E94164, HMP Nottingham, Perry Road, Sherwood, Nottinghamshire, NG5 3AG. Saptal was given a life sentence eleven years ago for defending himself against a racist attacker who died.

Simon Richards BH4011, HMP Blundeston, Lowestoft, Suffolk. Was at Guildford anti-road camp. Currently in for 4 years for animal liberation actions.

Geoff Sheppard MD1030, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX. ALF prisoner serving 7 years for possession of a shotgun and materials for making incendiary devices.

Barbara Trenholm RL1292, HMP Durham, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HU. Animal liberationist sentenced to 10 years for conspiracy to commit arson.

Ian Williamson CH5067, HMP Altcourse, Fazackersley, Liverpool, L9. Sentenced to 12 months after incidents at the resistance to the construction of the runway at Manchester.

Justin Wright CE3046, HMP YO1, Portland, Dorset, DT5 1DL. Same charge and sentence as Barbara Trenholm.

Overseas prisoners

Merle Austin Africa #006306, Debbie Sims Africa #006307, Janet Holloway Africa #006308 and Janine Phillips Africa #00309 all at: 451 Fullerton Ave., Cambridge Springs, PA. 16403-1238, USA. **Michael Davis Africa #AM4973 and Charles Simms Africa #AM 4975** both at: PO Box 244, Graterford, PA. 19426-0244, USA. **Edward Goodman Africa #AM 4974, PO Box 200, Camp Hill, PA. 17011-0200, USA.** **Delbert Orr Africa #AM 4985, and William Phillips Africa #4985** both at: Drawer K, Dallas, PA. 18612, USA. All prisoners involved with MOVE, a revolutionary ecological group that started in the early '70's in Philadelphia. The group was consistently persecuted by the state and it culminated in the

PRISONERS

police firebombing of their commune in 1985 which killed 11 people. (See Friends of MOVE below.)

Mumia Abu-Jamal #AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA. 15370-8090, USA. Outspoken radical journalist, ex-Black Panther and MOVE supporter framed for shooting a cop. On Death Row. (See page 113 in DoD No.5.)

Rod Coronado #03895000, FCI, Box 23811, Tuscon, AZ 85706, USA. Sea Shepherd/ALF/Native American/Earth First! activist in prison for various actions. (See below for support group.)

Standing Deer #640289, Ellis Unit 1, Huntsville, TX. 77343, USA. Native American activist now in his mid-70's Standing Deer has been in Super-Max prisons for over 20 years. No release date and no parole chances.

Ryan Durfee BA03, c/o Oxbow Jail, Inmate Mail, 3148 South 1100 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119, USA. **Mark Klein AA45, c/o Oxbow Jail, Inmate Mail, 3148 South 1100 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119, USA.** **Jason Troff, Section 9040, c/o SL County Jail, 450 South 300 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-3207, USA.** All serving 1 year for burning down a McDonalds restaurant that was under construction in West Jordan, Utah.

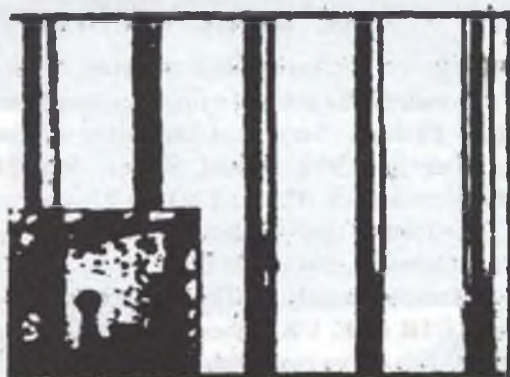
Ted Kaczynski, c/o Quin Denver, 10th Floor, 801 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, USA. Recently sentenced to life (so avoiding the death penalty) after pleading guilty to being the Unabomber—an anti-technology anarchist that waged a 17 year long bombing campaign against modern society.

Leonard Peltier #89637-132, Springfield Medical Center, 1900 West Sunshine, Box 4000, Springfield, MI. 65808, USA. Targeted by the FBI as a subversive, an American Movement activist framed up and convicted for the murder of two FBI agents in 1973 during an invasion of a Native American reservation. (Has defence group - see below.)

Daniel Ubziti, Iruneako Gartzela, San Roque Kalea z/g, Irunea-Pamplona, Spain. Serving 3 years for a sabotage action against the construction of the Itoiz Dam in the Basque region. (See p.102 in DoD No.6)

Mordechai Vanunu, Ashkelon Prison, PO Box 31417, Jerusalem, Israel. Serving 18 years for exposing Israel's secret nuclear programme. Held in solitary. **Delya Wilson, POB 7236, Bozeman, MT 59771, USA.** A US EF! activist facing 2 years in prison.

Helen Woodson, c/o C. Dixon, 3559 County Highway 6, Winconsin Dells, WI 53905, USA. Serving 16 years for holding up a bank with a fake gun, setting fire to the money and denouncing corporate greed and destruction of the environment.





International Prisoner Support Organisations

The Alternative Information Centre, PO Box 31417, Jerusalem, Israel. Palestinian prisoner stuff.

American Friends Service Committee Criminal Justice Program, 972 Broad Street, 6th Floor, Newark, New Jersey 07102, USA. A Quaker group heavily involved in the campaign against the brutal Maximum Control Units in the USA.

Amnesty International, 99-119 Rosebury Avenue, London, EC1R 4RE, UK. Liberal reformist organisation, but has lots of overseas branches with good information/resources on overseas stuff.

Anarchist Black Cross, c/o 121 Railton Road, London, SE24 0LR, UK. National and international anarchist network for prisoner support. Produce the excellent magazine 'Taking Liberties.'

Animal Liberation Front Support Group, BCM 1160, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. Deals with the obvious - so safeguard your personal security.

Apache/ABC, c/o PADI-BP 232, 75624, Paris CEDEX 13, France. Anarchist magazine - in French - with information on prisoners and prison resistance.

Bayou La Rose, PO Box 5464, Tacoma, WA 98415-0464, USA. Native American prisoner information.

Collectivo Anti-Militarista Pro Insumision (CAMPI), Chino/El Lokal, Calle De La Cera 1, 08001 Barcelona, Spain. Support group for people refusing military conscription in Spain where hundreds are imprisoned annually. (See page 102 'Ecology in Euskadi' in DoD No. 6)

Conviction, PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF, UK. Independent group focusing on framed prisoners.

Crossroad, 1340 West Ervin Park Road, Suite 108, Chicago IL 60657-8172, USA. Newspaper with information and articles from black prisoners in the USA.

Earth Liberation Prisoners, BM HEAL, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. Produces the invaluable 'Spirit of Freedom' newsletter which covers prisoners inside for actions with an ecological slant.

Friends of MOVE, PO Box 14129, London, W12 8GR, UK. The UK support group for MOVE, the eco-anarchist group in the USA, who were/are persecuted by the authorities in Philadelphia. (See above list.)

Fuascailt, PO Box 3923, London, NW5 1RA, UK. Irish prisoners of war - remember personal security!

Gandalf Defendants Campaign, PO Box 66, Stevenage, SG1 2TR, UK and also London Gandalf Support Campaign, c/o London Greenpeace, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London, WC1X 0AP, UK. Support for the jailed editors of Green Anarchist. (See above list and page 129 of this issue.)

Haven Books to Prisoners, BM Haven, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. A free books to prisoners scheme - donations of books, magazines etc. always welcome.

John Perotti Defence Fund, c/o 29 Sterlnochy Street, Findochty, Buckie, Banffshire, Scotland, AB56 4PQ, UK. Support for anarchist experiencing immense harassment for his USA 'jailhouse lawyer' activities.

Justice For Keith Mann, PO Box 3690, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 8NW, UK. Campaign supporting Keith Mann, an animal liberationist imprisoned for a long time. (See above list.)

Justice For Women, 55 Rathcoole Gardens, London, N8 9NE, UK. Focuses on women imprisoned for defending themselves against abuse.

Kurdistan Information Centre, 10 Glasshouse Yard, London, EC1A 4JN, UK. Kurdish - and possibly some Turkish - prisoner support.

Leonard Peltier Defence Committee, PO Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044, USA. Support for Leonard - a Native American framed by the FBI for the death of two of their agents at the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation. (See above list.)

M25 Three Campaign, c/o 28 Grimsell Path, London, SE5 0TB, UK. Frame up of three people for murder - ho hum... strangely enough they're all black.

North American Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group, PO Box 69597, 5845 Yonge Street, Willowdale, Ontario M2M 4K3, Canada. North American version of ALFSG.

Peace Prisoner Support, c/o 16 Sholebroke Avenue, Leeds, LS7 3HB, UK. Covers news of people in court and/or imprisoned for anti-military/nuclear actions.

Prison News Service, c/o Bulldozer, PO Box 5052, Stn. A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1W6, Canada. Newspaper mainly written by prisoners. Has information on prison struggles in the USA and Canada.

Rod Coronado Support Committee, PO Box 1891, Tucson, AZ 85702, USA. E-mail: seac-sw@seac.com Support for Rod, an amazing EF!/Sea Shepherd/ALF/ Native American activist. (See above list.)

Solidarity, PO Box 50633, Thessaloniki 54013, Greece. Magazine on anarchist/political prisoners from the thriving Greek anarchist scene.

Vegan Prisoners Supporters Group, PO Box 194, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3HD, UK. As it says - support for vegan prisoners.

Winston Silcott Defence Campaign, c/o The Selby Centre, Selby Road, Tottenham, London, N19, UK. Defence campaign for Winston - framed for murder after defending himself from a racist attack.

Book Reviews

Gathering Force: DIY Culture—

Radical action for those tired of waiting

by Elaine Brass and Sophie Poklewski Koziell. Edited by Denise Searle. (*The Big Issue*: London, 1997)

In the last year or so there has been a number of books published that refer to, and purport to cover, the direct action movement. This truly atrocious coffee table book is merely the latest addition to what is now a growing genre.¹ No doubt there will be many more to come if this niche in the market proves profitable. This review only deals with *Gathering Force*, but moving beyond that, the criticisms that are levelled here can be extrapolated and applied to many, if not all, of the mainstream representations of us that are currently flooding on to the market.

But why bother with books like *Gathering Force*? For anyone who has actually been involved in any of the events written about in this book the reportage and analysis it presents are often laughably ill-informed and inadequate. However it is important to understand what function this whole genre of books, TV programmes, plays etc. fulfils as part of a general attack on the radical direct action movement and not just to casually dismiss the real threat that it presents.

The book takes the form of themed chapters on: 'Animal Rights', 'Roads and Transport', 'Land and Housing', 'Our Basic Rights and Liberties', 'Raves and Festivals', 'Alternative Media' and 'Community-based Economics'. Taken in isolation these aren't too bad as they largely stick to the facts and let activists speak for themselves (although they are marked by omissions, inaccuracies and a biased selection, of which more later). Neither, however, are they spectacularly novel or informative; nothing here will be unfamiliar to anyone with even a passing familiarity with 'DIY Culture'.

These topic-based chapters provide no analysis of the phenomena they record. This task is kept for the framing chapters that sandwich the main text of the book as 'Introduction' and 'The Future'. Here pages are given to the precious thoughts of such well known 'DIYers' as Cabinet Minister Chris Smith, editor of *The Independent* Andrew Marr and lefty think tank wanker Geoff Mulgan. Thus the words of the activists themselves are presented, encapsulated and offered up with-



in a liberal political framework. Our actions are packaged; wrapped up in a sugar coating to make them more palatable for the middle classes to swallow. It is almost like people can't be trusted to speak for themselves but their actions have to be explained by an array of 'respectable' experts; interpreted and made safe for the readers of the book. In case you were going to be scared off by the radicalism of all those nasty protester types this book says they're not really anarchists, they're just lobbying using light-hearted and imaginative stunts. Oh, well—that's alright then.

"The channels of democracy seemed to have silted up"

The writers of *Gathering Force* bang away at their pet subjects throughout the book. According to them the main problem with Britain today, and the one which 'DIY Culture' exists to rectify, is a lack of communication between those in power and those they rule. "The channels of democracy seemed to have silted up" they winge (GF: p37),² and this theme is harped on incessantly throughout the book.³ 'DIY culture' is thus presented as an effort at unblocking these channels, at making ourselves heard in the corridors of power—a sort of pep-me-up tonic to rejuvenate British democracy. The authors quote Heritage Secretary



Chris Smith: "Parliament and Government tend to be a bit out of touch with a lot of thinking and modes of speech that particularly young people are using... There are certain problems with communication where there is no shared language, no shared assumptions and no culture" (GF: p11). This utterly naïve expectation that the state has any interest in listening to us (or that it would do anything about it even if it did⁴) demonstrates that the authors have no understanding of the state as having radically different interests to ourselves. For them it is simply a question of our voice not being heard. It is left unsaid but assumed that as soon as we *are* heard our concerns will be met. It is also assumed that our concerns are limited enough to be *capable* of being met by the government. Personally I am not really interested in any demand that the government could easily agree to.

The problem is not one of the government being unaware of our existence; while the authors of *Gathering Force* witter on about how we are being ignored the state is only too well aware of our existence. They ought to be—they have enough MI5 and special branch people monitoring us.⁵ Not only that, but the state routinely has to deal with the effects of our actions; for example Thames Valley Police's request for more money from the Home Office to police the Newbury Bypass protests, and a similar request from Sussex cops during the Shoreham demonstrations. The problem is not that they are unaware of us but that they hate us, for our aim is the destruction of the system that gives them their power. And if we have any sense we should hate them too, as they will stop at nothing to defend their privileges.

Recuperation

Gathering Force is not designed for consumption by anyone involved in the movement(s) it describes and is parasitical upon, but by passive spectators. Equally it is obviously not written by anyone with a personal involvement in what they're talking about but by professional journalists coming to their subject matter from outside. It is almost a 'textbook' example of what is called 'recuperation'. In situationist jargon, recuperation is the process whereby a radical phenomenon potentially threatening to the existing order is transformed or integrated into a commodity. Capitalism assimilates our ideas and actions, dilutes the passion and anger behind them, and then repackages them as something harmless or even beneficial to itself, to sell back to us for our own consumption. *Gathering Force* is an attempt, conscious or unconscious, to recuperate the direct action movement by manipulating it into a

liberal, reformist agenda. This attempt operates in many complex ways. Some of them are discussed below.

'DIY Culture' or 'Direct Action'?—Struggles over the definition of the movement

What we call ourselves decides how we define ourselves and which people we see as sharing a common cause with us and which people we do not. Thus, for example, whether road protests are part of the 'direct action movement' or 'DIY culture' (at least as defined by *Gathering Force*) is an important matter. These are not just two different words for the same thing: they have a substantially different content. The label helps to create the reality it describes. If we become known by the label 'DIY culture' and if we adopt this description of ourselves then this will to an extent determine our theory and practice. The use of the word 'culture' is also telling; is that really what we have in common? Is that all we are—a 'culture'? To the contrary; what we have in common is a common set of interests bound together by practical struggle.

There is a constant struggle in progress over the definition and composition of the movement. Compare contacts lists: both *Gathering Force* and *Do or Die* include Reclaim The Streets as a contact, but they include the Institute of Race Relations and Liberty as being part of the same movement as RTS whereas we include the Anarchist Black Cross and Anti-Fascist Action. Maybe this is reading too much into a contacts list, but it is at least indicative of where we are respectively coming from: are we a civil liberties lobbying force or are we about autonomous anti-capitalist struggle? Who do we make links with—Charter 88 or the Anarchist Black Cross?

Their sort of people

Gathering Force is thus about presenting a certain image of the movement(s) it describes—as being something called 'DIY Culture'. This representation is aimed at an audience of liberal reformist middle class types to present us to them as people who are essentially engaged in the same project they are. We are presented as *their sort of people* and as being alright really because we haven't actually got anything much in common with the ALF or *Green Anarchist*, but much more with the Green Party, Charter 88 or the think tank Demos. This image will then serve to attract that sort of person into the movement and thus amplify the tendencies dragging it in that direction.

The book is also a baited hook for direct activists to bring them back into the mainstream. The initial chapters aren't too offensive—we follow their argument



along (much of it presented in the words of activists themselves!) and are eventually led to the total capitulation expressed by Des Kaye, organiser of the annual Kingston Green Fair: "Instead of looking at an enemy, we need to find the areas of similarity where we can work together... This has to be the way forward, instead of this Socialist Workers Party mentality of destroy the state... We have a system, we have an establishment and we can utilise them" (GF: p123).

The aim of all this is to reconnect the mainstream and those outside of, and potentially threatening to it. This is effected by trying to make links between the most radical edge of the mainstream and the most mainstream edge of the radical faction. Thus the authors have chosen to talk to those within the direct action movement who advocate working within the system (such as "award-winning Emma Must"⁶) and then are attempting to link them with those outside the direct action movement (Chris Smith, Geoff Mulgan, Andrew Marr etc.) who want to draw 'DIYers' into the mainstream.

Omissions

In order to define this thing they have labelled 'DIY Culture' the authors have had to make arbitrary choices about content. Or *almost* arbitrary, for the selection runs to a liberal agenda. I realise that no book can ever hope to cover every aspect of what is a very diverse

and broad movement, but in noting what this book has left out it betrays its true colours. Apart from the startlingly obvious omissions (peace and anti-nuclear movements anyone?) there is also very little mention of what is arguably the most important direct action struggle in our life times: the resistance to the Poll Tax.

In addition, in one of the most irritating pieces of writing in the book (and believe me, there is some stiff competition!) which could have been taken directly from an right-wing authoritarian organ such as *The Daily Telegraph*, the authors state: "At the other end of the spectrum are the exploits of the more radical animal rights groups such as hunt saboteurs or the Animal Liberation Front storm troopers [!] who set fire to abattoirs and attack laboratories that use animals for testing. These people are still seen by some as the lunatic fringe and their concerns go unheeded by those in power" (GF: p28). A police press release could not have said it better! To give barely more than a paragraph to the anti-Poll Tax struggle and to dismiss in two sentences a whole section of the animal liberation

movement, clearly shows the intention of *Gathering Force* to exclude the more radical elements of the direct action movement from 'DIY culture'; their self-defined area of study.

The good cop/bad cop game of ideology

At the same time as the connections between the more liberal fringe of the direct action movement and the more radical edge of the liberal mainstream are emphasised and played-up, the more radical edge of the faction outside the mainstream is totally marginalised or ignored. This book carries out in the realm of ideology the same tactics often used by the police to destroy radical movements in practice: split the movement by integrating half of them back into the mainstream—into non-threatening activity (e.g.: Agenda 21); start talking about 'dialogue' and 'communication' and then marginalise, ignore and suppress the ones who won't be co-opted. In the good cop/ bad cop game of ideology this book is the nice cop. *Green Anarchist* have felt the hand of the bad cop.⁷ The attempt to manipulate the direct action movement in a liberal, reformist stance and the persecution of those advocating a more radical position are really two halves of the same process. Our choice is either to be incorporated thus or to be forced to define ourselves

"This book carries out in the realm of ideology the same tactics often used by the police to destroy radical movements in practice."

against the positions presented in this book and to potentially suffer

the same treatment meted out to *GA* and those who won't be assimilated.

Liberalism⁸

I may have made all these tactics of recuperation sound like some sort of deliberate plot, but that is not necessarily the case. The authors probably have the best intentions in the world and a genuine enthusiasm for what they think of as 'DIY Culture', but given their liberal perspective the harmful effect of the book is almost inevitable. Therefore the root of what is wrong with *Gathering Force* is its liberal politics.

Although 'liberal' is often used as a sort of insult or to mean 'not hardcore enough', it has a specific meaning. Liberalism is the political ideology of the bourgeoisie—it is the set of ideas, the theoretical framework, that goes hand-in-hand with capitalist social relations. Liberals see society as being an aggregate of fundamentally separate and atomised individuals. This is the view of society expressed when we are told that "we are all *just* individuals aren't we?". You typically hear this comment in relation to the idea that under-

neath their uniforms the police, the bailiffs and even the chief executives of multinationals are *just* individuals like us and if only we would communicate with them on a human level and showed them what nice people we are, then there would be no need for conflict. Underlying this (to say the least) rather naïve idea is the fundamental liberal view of the world as simply composed of individual human beings that ultimately have the same common interest. Liberals are fundamentally blind to the existence of social classes with inherently antagonistic interests, as the authors of *Gathering Force* quite freely say: "DIY Culture isn't confined to any class" (GF: p8). To them Britain is essentially one big happy family; there may be some problems that need ironing out but these can only be caused by ignorance or misunderstanding because basically everyone's interests are the same.

The liberal idea that we are all equal citizens because we are all 'equal before the law' obscures essential differences. For example—Rupert Murdoch and I both have an equal 'right' to free speech. But this 'right' that liberals endlessly bleat on about is meaningless when we do not have an equal ability to freely speak. There is an essential class difference; he's a rich wanker who controls half the media in this country and I have little or no access to that whatsoever. Therefore we cannot agree with Margaret Thatcher when she said "there is no such thing as society. Only individuals and their families", because it is individuals like her and her family who have power, and individuals like us who have fuck all.

"It is about people wanting to take responsibility for their own lifestyles and realising that how they live—in terms of their own health or what they consume—is actually a political action. It's a realisation that individual actions influence the overall fabric of society and how it works" (GF: p9). Here Geoff Mulgan of the think tank Demos neatly expresses the liberal worldview. Liberalism pretends that we are all *just* individuals, the bearers of various 'rights', i.e.: we are all free to buy and sell as equals, relating to each other through the market. The 'liberty' of liberalism is the 'right' to private property—the fundamental freedom to buy and

sell unhindered. Because of this, for liberals the primary way that we have an influence or exert control over our lives is through individual consumer choices. Green consumerism is a fine example of liberal recuperation—a potentially dangerous green movement was transformed into a matter of which commodity to choose—thus propping up the whole business of commodity production that caused the environmental crisis in the first place. Contrary to what Geoff Mulgan says, our influence as individuals is minimal—especially when it is channelled into choosing one brand over another. It is only when we begin to act collectively that we stand any chance of effecting real change.

The Future?

The authors use the final chapter 'The Future', to share with us their wisdom as to the direction the 'DIY movement'

should take. The focus for this chapter is the events in September 1996 and after, where links were made with the sacked Liverpool Dockers. The most amazing thing that this book manages to do in writing and commenting on these issues is the quite impressive task of glossing over any form of action taken with the dockers. This betrays the writers as spectators rather than the people who participated in the events. Any of the hundreds of people who were there will tell you that the links

were forged not in the meetings or discussions leading up to the events, although the groundwork was laid there, but in the actions on the Monday where together we invaded the port, resisted the police attacks on the picket lines and laughed, danced, sung and then got drunk together. Put simply, this is the real reason why the book is such a woefully inadequate document trying to catalogue and comment on us all. It has been written by people who have experienced very little, or possibly even none, of the passion, anger and joy that we have all felt on numerous occasions on evictions, actions or even simply sitting around the fire with our friends.

So with this wealth of personal experience to back up their opinions, they proceed to lecture us: "the challenge now is to... open channels of communication to the new Labour Government so that those who hold political, economic and social power will listen to

**THE POST-
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those who have justified grievances" (GF: p117). To press this point even further, George Monbiot, quoted more than anyone else throughout the book, then says: "We can save ourselves an awful lot of headaches if we can get our concerns onto the Government's agenda." (GF: p122). Well excuse me, but I was under the impression that these are the same people that we are trying to bypass and take authority and power away from when we take direct action. Trying to "open channels of communication" with them, as the writer so quaintly puts it, is nothing more than a negation of direct action and all the acts of resistance that we have taken in the past. But it gets worse: "DIYers need to participate in the mainstream to change that which they complain about—even voting and being elected" (GF: p123). The disgust felt when I read these quotes is deep and heartfelt. To say that this is what we now need is nothing more than an insult to all those who have risked all on actions; been arrested, fined, imprisoned or worse, and is abhorrent—especially coming from somebody who has done none of these things.

Direct Action as militant lobbying

We can see here that there are clearly emerging two entirely separate ideas of what direct action is about. Is taking direct action our way of being heard by, and asking favours from, the policy makers because we are not represented properly in parliament? As *Spectator* journalist Alisdair Palmer says: "People are no longer lobbying by letter, they are lobbying by protesting and capturing media attention" (GF: p42). Is this what we're doing? Or is direct action an attempt to form communities of resistance in a global anti-capitalist struggle: to create a world fit for our desires—one free of hierarchy, exploitation and oppression?

Well, I guess you know where I stand. Direct action is not an elaborate form of political lobbying and Earth First! is not, as someone once said, "The Green Party with bolt cutters". If direct action is about anything at all, it is about taking power away from the politicians and bureaucrats and seizing control over our own lives. As the graffiti said: "We are not going to demand anything. We are not going to ask for anything. We are going to take. We are going to occupy."⁹

The two positions are contradictory, and ultimately you can, of course, only be on one side. Eventually all people will have to make a decision as to which side they are on. In reading *Gathering Force* it seems clear that the writers, editors and publishers of this book have chosen their side already. After reading the book you must decide on which side they have chosen to stand—and then treat them accordingly.

What are we gonna do about it?

If this review has been overly negative let me offer as a sort of excuse the fact that as a movement we are often so over-awed by the fact that anyone has taken any interest in us, that we totally lose control of all our critical faculties and become far too tolerant of this kind of *shit*—only seeing the positive and never the negative. For example, the most frequently used argument to try and validate books like *Gathering Force* is, to quote a review of a similar book: "If [it] inspires one 16 year old to go out and lock on, set up a sound system or live in a bus, then it has done a good job".¹⁰ It must, however, be borne in mind that many people may be put off getting involved in direct action due to such stereotypical and inaccurate portrayals of us.

Therefore, as a conclusion (of sorts) I would suggest a couple of things to enable us to try and counteract the flood of poorly researched, inaccurately written and expensively sold books about us that are oozing onto the bookshelves. Firstly, we must get more clued up—as we become more successful we invite more attacks from the state and its hangers-on. People seem to be much more prepared for physical attacks (offices being raided, conspiracy charges etc.) than they are for attack through recuperation, yet this can be just as deadly in its effect on our actions. Unfortunately, we are not totally innocent parties in the watering down of our ideas and the reasons behind our struggles. When was the last time you saw a campaign leaflet (apart from a very few notable exceptions) that declared its aim as the halting of the road/airport/quarry construction and the destruction of capitalism? Maybe after the agreement at the 1997 EF! Summer Gathering that we are an anti-capitalist movement we may see this change over the coming months.

To combat recuperation, radical action must find its counterpart in radical theory and the direct action movement must lose its 'deeds not words' antipathy to ideas. *Gathering Force* may end up doing us a service after all, by forcing us to think more deeply about who we are and what we do. If it results in the direct action movement getting more theoretically clued up and specifically defining itself against the positions represented in this book then perhaps it will have been no bad thing after all.

Most importantly however, we must get our version of events out there and—this cannot be emphasised enough—write our own history. We are notoriously terrible at this, and rather than just moan at every book that we feel has betrayed our ideals and misrepresented us, we must start to actively counter it. The prolif-

eration of computers and Desk Top Publishing (or even, for you real luddites, cut and paste and then photocopying—potato prints anyone?) means the ability to produce a few hundred cheap copies of a pamphlet are within the realms of possibility for most campaigns—and even individuals.¹¹

The writers, editors and publishers of this book, if they are reading this, should really sit down and think about their motives for bothering to do this at all. What are the real reasons for their writing and publishing a book on us? Are they purely trying to get the 'message' out to a wider audience, or are they, as some suggest, just trying to create a name for themselves in the media world?

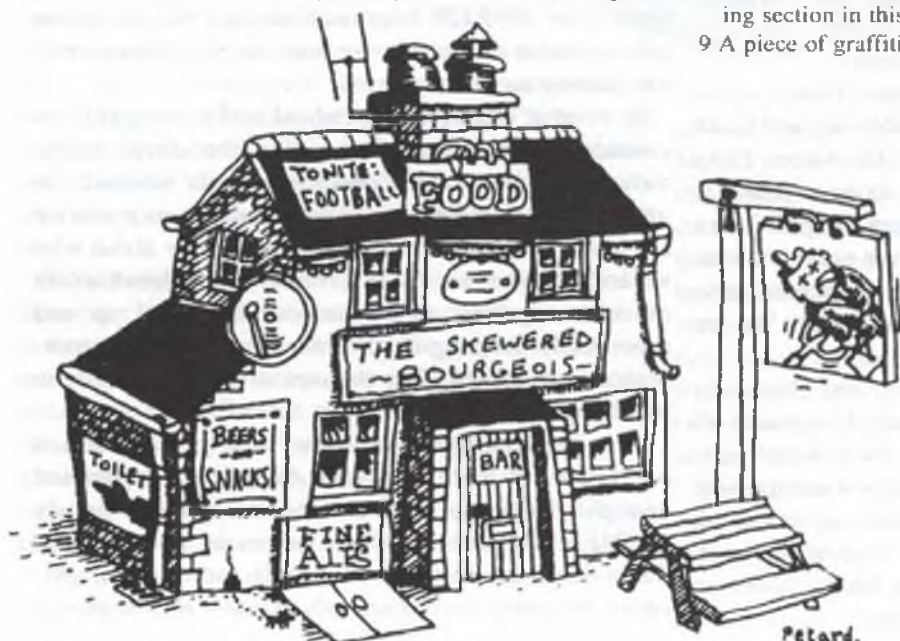
I am sure they would say that they really believe in the movement, but the question should then be asked: 'Why are you not involved in it?' As our autonomist friends correctly point out, "...journalists delude themselves that they serve 'the people' despite the fact that they work for media whose very existence presupposes that 'the people' are kept atomised as wage-slaves".¹²

I would hope that no one who has actually been involved in any amount of direct action could be as naïve as the authors of *Gathering Force*. The experience of disobedience can sometimes change people's ideas very quickly. One of the more inspiring quotes in the book comes from somebody involved in the live exports protests: "I've been kept in a box for 58 years and had never dared to question things... but when you step out of your box you suddenly realise that you don't live in a democracy, it is just a word" (GF: p33).

I would humbly suggest that perhaps the authors actually need to get out there and have their faith in democracy shattered.

Notes

- 1 For example Judge Dredd takes on the eco-protestors in recent issues of 2000AD, a play called Road Rage was recently performed in Edinburgh and set on a protest site. Ruth Rendell's most recent Inspector Wexford mystery, also called Road Rage, at least two recent academic conferences on the direct action movement, academic books etc. etc.
- 2 Henceforward all page references and quotations from *Gathering Force* will be presented in this fashion; "GF: p37" denotes *Gathering Force* page 37.
- 3 see GF: pp. 10,11,71, 117, 123, 124. And probably elsewhere too.
- 4 "The system allowed us to spend decades in argument, and huge sums of money, making an intellectually unshakeable case, only for the system to brush it all aside"—Chris Gillham of the Twyford Down Association (GF: p37). Listened to and then ignored: that's democracy!
- 5 see 'The Empire Strikes Back' Do or Die No.6 (1997) p.136 for a good account of this.
- 6 This appellation appears to have become part of her name for the two are never mentioned separately.
- 7 see article in this issue of Do or Die.
- 8 In writing this section I have drawn heavily on a discussion document prepared by Brighton Autonomists for the Brighton anti-Criminal Justice Act group Justice? probably some time in 1995. I have been lamentably unable to phrase it any better than the author of this document and so have borrowed heavily. Many of the same arguments can be found in *Aufheben* issue 4 (see recommended reading section in this issue of Do or Die).
- 9 A piece of graffiti from the 1968 uprisings in France. See Enragés and Situationists in the Occupations Movement, France, May '68 by René Viénet (Autonomedia/Rebel Press, 1992) p. 54. In 'Reclaim the Streets!', Do or Die No.6 (1997) p. 1
- 10 review of *Senseless Acts of Beauty* by George McKay, in Do or Die No.6 (1997), p. 145
- 11 See *The Battle for The Trees* by Merrick (Godhaven Press, 1997) for an excellent example of this in action—or indeed Road Raging, Do or Die or any of the wealth of fanzines, books and pamphlets that are self-published (see recommended reading section in this issue)
- 12 *Aufheben* No.4 (Summer 1995), p. 27.



Anarchy after Leftism

by Bob Black (*Columbia Alternative Library Press; Columbia, USA. 1997*) ISBN 1-890532-00-2

This is the first book published by Columbia Alternative Library (C.A.L.) Press, a "publishing collective dedicated to the utter destruction of the dominant society".¹ Its appearance also signals a continuation in the round of arguments between Murray Bookchin and the loose circle of people grouped around 'Fifth Estate' and 'Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed'²—both US published journals of an anti-authoritarian stance critical of the totality of civilisation.

Over the last few years a number of people from the anti-authoritarian/anarchist scene³ in the USA have come under increasingly harsh criticism from Murray Bookchin and his cabal of Social Ecologist academics. This criticism has culminated, so far, in the publication of Bookchin's latest book 'Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm'⁴ which takes swipes at a number of people and ideas from the aforementioned milieu—and it is in reply to Bookchin's tract that Bob Black has written this book.

Bob Black's book is an anthology of writings, all of which stand as articles on their own, and they all have the underlying theme not only of criticism of Bookchin's theory and writings, but leftist anarchism in general. The book is broken into 11 chapters that each cover different ground; ranging from an open attack on some of the issues raised in 'Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism' to addressing questions surrounding issues such as organisation, individualism and primitivism.

Black does not write particularly well if judged solely on the grounds of grammar, yet one area where he is at his strongest is in vociferous humorous criticism. In one chapter he parodies

Bookchin's well known essay 'Listen Marxist!' with a two page chapter entitled 'Shut up, Marxist!' where he dismisses Bookchin's latest warblings as vulgar Marxism in disguise (and not a very good one at that). The main thrust of Black's criticism seems to be twofold; firstly he draws out the contradictions between what Bookchin has said in the past, and that which he now preaches; and secondly, and most importantly, he attacks the very ideas proposed by Bookchin now. It is possible to try and dismiss some of the criticisms from the first category on the grounds of relevance. This is especially notable when he uses quotes from writings made by Bookchin as far back as 1963 (under the pseudonym Lewis Herber) to illustrate his point. Pointing out these discrepancies is a particularly weak form of criticism (who amongst us does



not look back at some of our previously held ideas and cringe?). Having said that, I am sure Black knows this and points them out to get a personal kick (probably not a very healthy one!) from drawing attention to the contradictions in Bookchin's past and present writings.

Criticism from some quarters may be levelled at Black for the distance he is trying to put between the ideas he and others espouse, and the political left wing. The usage of the designations 'left' and 'right' are commonplace in today's political arena, whether parliamentary or not, but ultimately are empty—slogan words that have no real meaning. The global politics of today are far too complicated to be reduced to mere throw away outdated terminology. Breaking from the term 'leftism' means more than turning our backs on the ideologies that it encompasses. It means a qualified change on every level—from organisation to practical methods of resistance—and anything else merely falls into the cesspool of change for change's sake; 'band-wagonism' at it's worst.

As mentioned earlier Black uses Bookchin as a springboard to a wider critique of leftism; yet it is not just the terminology of words like 'leftism' that Black is trying to distance himself from—rather it is from the incoherent and out-dated collection of ideologies that lie behind them. These show the left "as all it really is, a variant of hegemonic ideology—a loyal opposition—which was formerly effective in recuperating revolutionary tendencies."⁵ In rejecting this epithet of 'leftism' it does not mean we should place the critique of it at the heart of our practice and theory, nor does it mean we have rejected all the history of resistance that the left has been involved with. It is more a rejection of all the problems associated with the left and is thus a re-appropriation of the true revolutionary nature that has been cloaked in party lines, dogma and paper selling for too long.

All the bickering, abuse and criticism that has flown between the two groups of protagonists in this ongoing dispute may seem irrelevant and a purely academic self-indulgence to many; provoking an understandable 'a pox on both your houses' type reaction. Yet if this happens people will have missed the most important thread of the arguments and discussions put forward here by Black. One of the most pertinent observations he makes is that; "[t]he anarchists are at a turning point. For the first time in history, they are the only revolutionary current." (AAL: 140.) This point is easily extrapolated to the situation here in the UK where we, with the moribund state of the left and the fairly recent growth of ecological direct action, are placed firmly in the category of a significant threat to the cur-

rent system. To have any hope of making good on this potential we must realise we are not an isolated historical phenomenon, but rather a recent manifestation of a current of resistance that emerged as a reaction to all we desire to transcend. In order to increase our effectiveness we must actively engage in this process of resistance. This includes critically looking at and assessing past and present political theory and practices; which is where the validity of this book becomes apparent in relation to our own struggles.

To conclude then; this book spends a fair proportion of it's time analysing and criticising the theories and writings of Murray Bookchin, but this is far less important than the connected ideas articulated, and attempts made, however flawed⁶, to show a possible radical direction for all those who desire the blossoming of the free spirit, and for that reason alone it is worth reading. I shall finish this review with the same paragraph and sentiments that Bob Black expresses when he concludes his book with the words; "There is life after the left. And there is anarchy after anarchism. Post-leftist anarchists are striking off in many directions. Some may find the way—better yet, the ways—to a free future." (AAL:150)

Notes

- 1 Taken from 'A note about C.A.L. Press' in the preface of the book.
- 2 For reviews of these publications see 'Recommended Reading' in this issue of DoD.
- 3 Those people in Bookchin's firing line include Hakim Bey, Jason McQuinn, John Zerzan and David Watson, who has recently published an appraisal and critique of Bookchin's work entitled 'Beyond Bookchin. Preface for a Future Social Ecology' (Black and Red/Autonomedia: Detroit, USA 1997.)
- 4 Published by AK Press: Edinburgh 1995.
- 5 Page 142 - 'Anarchy after Leftism' by Bob Black. (C.A.L. Press: Columbia, USA. 1997) All quotes taken from the book used in this review will be simply identified by the abbreviation 'AAL' followed by the page number in brackets, thus: (AAL: 45) denotes 'Anarchy after Leftism: page 45.'
- 6 And, as with all texts, flaws abound, one of which prompted the publication of a leaflet concerning the usage of a phrase in Black's book where he likens a criticism of Marx made by Bakunin, using Marx's ethnicity as a term of abuse, to his own of Bookchin. Irrelevant twaddle by nit-picking politicians with nothing better to write about, important criticism of a raging anti-Semite, or something in between? I'm unsure; read the book and leaflet and make your own mind up. Copies of the leaflet are available from: Unpopular Books, Box 15, 138 Kingsland High Street, London, E8 2NS, UK.



Frog spaniel: an insectivorous dog for ponds and other aquatic habitats.
-From "Concrete Jungle".

Concrete Jungle

Edited by Mark Dion and Alexis Rockman. (*Juno Books*, 1996) ISBN 0-9651042-2-2

Concrete Jungle bills itself as a "pop media investigation of death and survival in urban ecosystems", an apt summation of the content of this excellent book.

Its premise is that "the whole idea of nature as something separate from human experience is a lie. Humans and nature construct one another. Ignoring that fact obscures the one way out of the current environmental crisis—a living within and alongside of nature without dominating it." (p.6) Thankfully, it avoids falling into the fashionable post-modern trap of seeing nature as entirely socially constructed (cf. "Uncommon Ground: Towards Reinventing Nature", Ed. William Cronon, Norton 1996) - the hugely arrogant notion that nature has no independent existence or meaning, other than that which humanity ascribes to it.

As the editors of *Concrete Jungle* say, "the idea of the social construction of Nature does not mean to obliterate the obvious fact that there is a reality upon which we can all agree." (p.6) However, they also point out that animals "are often ciphers bearing our own anxieties, fantasies and assumptions about ourselves and

the natural world." (p.8) In an extremely stimulating interview in the book, Professor Andrew Ross argues that 'Nature' is the ultimate alibi, a 'tabula rasa' which "can always be wheeled in to ventriloquise support for a social claim about environmental matters... Nature cannot speak for itself, but everyone else is all too willing to do the job." (p.18/19) Being such a malleable concept, it can be turned to almost anyone's advantage - thus, tragically, "environmental security provides a doctrinal framework for the Pentagon's new global mission after the Cold War... the masters of the New World Order are learning how to use [ecology]." (p.21/22) In a telling aside, Ross terms this: "the Greening of the military, or if you like, the militarisation of the Greens" (p.21).²

In a world increasingly determined by image and representation (the "information war"), one of the most crucial tasks must be to address "how this symbolic use of animals impacts in very real ways on the ecology of the Alaskan tundra or the river front valley." (p.8) Perhaps the issue is not so much the social construction of nature but of 'environmentalism' - and the feedback loop (or 'dialectic') that then furnishes us with the 'nature' that we desire, or deserve. To digress, an example from a study which revealed the connection between your political views and the state of your garden: "The yards of conservatives were neater and more orderly, and their owners spent more time on tidying-up activities... Liberals, on the other hand, worked harder on nurturing activities such as watering and fertilising, and had a greater diversity of vegetation."³ *Concrete Jungle's* mission is to explore these impacts and connections, a challenge that - irrespective of the theoretical baggage outlined above - it carries off in a "very real" and literally down-to-earth way.

It brings an inquisitive eye to bear on the obscured detritus of the urban ecosystem; those opportunistic 're-selected' species - eg. rats, pigeons, cockroaches, (in London, the grimy mice scurrying beneath the Underground tracks) - which thrive in the interstices of the city despite being almost universally shunned by humanity: a testament to irrepressible life, reappropriating hostile terrain.

It is a sad reflection that in our alienated obsession with wilderness, or untainted 'true' nature, urban environmentalists have tended to avert their gaze from that most fertile ground, our own backyard - the domain in which the human/nature interface is often at its most intense.⁴ But this seems peripheral, even invisible, on the radar of our concerns. (Richard Mabey's "Flora Britannica" is particularly good on this relationship between people and place - one of "collective mutual

ownership"⁵. Plants are internalised into culture through language and folklore, people (especially children) inhabit and redefine the most unlikely and fleeting spaces of urban 'wasteground'⁶).

Concrete Jungle in fact goes one better, and devotes a queasy but mesmerising chapter to that which is 'closer to home' than anything else: the human body as habitat. This is one of the great taboo subjects, not fit for polite conversation (and all the more fascinating because of that!) - perhaps because it is an uncomfortable reminder "of our part in the biological contract... that we, like all animals, are part of a complex web of relations that is not always in our favour." (p.8)

If I have made this book sound a little po-faced and ponderously theoretical, nothing could be further from the truth. It is, as advertised, emphatically a 'pop media' approach to this rich and complex subject. Produced by one half of the old Re/Search team (responsible for the brilliant "Pranks") it remains true to their trademark sassy and eclectic sensibility. I'm delighted that they've finally turned their open-minded and playful attentions to ecology - calling upon an amazingly diverse range of contributors: from the zoo manager who despises zoos, the sanitation engineer's grisly tales of New York's underbelly (the sewer infrastructure and its residents), forensic pathologists, artists, 'pest' exterminators, road-kill recipe chefs (hilarious, and probably delicious - 'freeganism', anyone?), and many more. There are a million tales in the naked city, so they say, and a good number of them are here. It is hard to imagine an earnest green (or any other 'single discipline') approach yielding such fresh perspectives.

One other very positive feature of Concrete Jungle is the way it keeps you guessing; if there is such a thing as the 'Truth', it is a lot more subtle and elusive than we might comfortably like to think. Hence a contributor who luridly demonises rats is succeeded by excerpts from a rat enthusiast newsletter. Likewise, there is an informative and upsetting run-down of the disastrous consequences of introduced species around the world. This is juxtaposed with "The Mania for Native Plants in Nazi Germany", which reminds us of the existence of 'Nazi landscape gardening' (!) - including the Reich Landscape Law, which sought to "forbid the use of foreign plants in German landscapes". (p.67) A lot of the pieces in this book that at first seem obscure unexpectedly take on a much greater significance - in this case, as an illustration of the terrifying ease with which a passion to preserve the local can tip over into repressive xenophobia: fascism and pluralism vying for supremacy in the German garden.

(The spectre of 'green' fascism still haunts us to this day.⁷)

This example also brings us full circle - "Humans and nature construct one another". People invoke the authority of the most expedient version of 'nature', whichever reflects and reinforces their ideologies and practices. EF! is in this game - so too was Kropotkin, his "Mutual Aid" a riposte to the cuthroat 'Nature' of Social Darwinism.

This is an excellent book, crammed full of more juicy anecdotes than I have space for here. But here's a little taster, especially for our 'nation of animal lovers': "The voracious eating of the dead by household cats and dogs is well-known. The soft tissues of the face and head are preferred, sometimes to the degree that decapitation occurs... Another frequent cadaveric target for rodents and pets is the genitalia, particularly the penis and the scrotum... In reports of such feasting by pets, it is often emphasised that no other food sources were available. To the contrary is the following story told... by an emergency services technician: at a house to which he had been dispatched to check on a woman who had not been seen by neighbours for some time, the technician was greeted enthusiastically by a small white poodle. The woman was found dead on the kitchen floor, much of her face defleshed. A bowl filled with dog food sat only several feet from the owner's body." (p.134)

Notes

1. As Oscar Wilde might have said, " 'Nature' is the last refuge of the scoundrel".
2. See also the material on the so-called 'environment industry' in Dead Trees EF!'s reprint of Fifth Estate's "Revolution Against the Mega-Machine".
3. "Lawn Study Offers Political Fodder", National Geographic April 1989.
4. See also: "This Car Stops for Road-Kill", Concrete Jungle p.177-180.
5. "West Papua - Plunder in Paradise", Indigenous Peoples and Development Series Report No.6, Anti-Slavery Society 1990, p.12.
6. "Flora Britannica", Richard Mabey, Sinclair-Stevenson 1996 - eg. the steel industry-dependent figs of the River Don, Sheffield (p.66-67), and the Japanese Knotweed ("bambarb") forests used by Bristol children (p.108). See also "Tree of Heaven", "Concrete Jungle" p.70.
7. See: "Eco-Fascism: Lessons from the German Experience", Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, AK Press ?, and "Swamp Fever, Primitivism and the Ideological Vortex....", David Watson, Fifth Estate Fall 1997.

Animals and Men is the UK's premier journal of 'cryptozoology': the study of unknown or mysterious animals. It features items as diverse as the many big cat sightings around the British Isles, lake and sea monster myths and titbits from the wilder shores of ecology, such as the recent invasion of the Thames by the Chinese Mitten crab (!) I like their attitude too - it's good to see that their graphics are credited to the "Copyright Liberation Front". Subscriptions are £8 for 4 issues. Send to: The Centre for Fortean Zoology, 15 Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, Devon, EX4 2NA, UK.

Arkangel is a big, fat, well produced animal lib magazine. It features a large section of local and national group reports, international news from everywhere and hunt sabbing news. Plus some longer articles and always the beautifully drawn front cover. Probably the best all-round animal lib magazine. Subscriptions are £8 for 4 issues. Send to: Arkangel, BCM 9240, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.

Aufheben is an essential annual autonomist Marxist magazine. Issue 3 ('94) contains the best analysis to date of the anti-roads movement and issue 4 ('95) takes on the CJA and primitivism. The latest issue (No.6) covers the USSR, the Class War split and the Situationists. It would be well worth reading every issue of *Aufheben*; for example, their 1995 analysis of the contradictions in the anti-CJA movement (including "the world-view of the fluffy"!) still applies in many respects today. Copies are £2 each or £5

for a 3 issue subscription. Make cheques payable to "Aufheben" and send to: Aufheben, c/o PO Box 2971, Brighton, BN2 2TT, UK. A4/48 pages.

Auto-Free Times is the quarterly magazine of the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium. Number 11 (Spring '97) contains a hilarious selection of letters from red-neck lunatic readers of Car and Driver magazine after it interviewed the editor of Auto-Free Times. Also an article on how NAFTA promises more highways, native resistance to roads in Panama and human-powered solutions including Brian Campbell's incredible house-bikes. Subscriptions are \$30 (\$15 low income) for 4 issues. Make cheques to "Alliance for a Paving Moratorium" and send to: PO Box 4347, Arcata, CA 95518, USA. A4/38 pages.

Autotoxicity is a beautifully produced, A4 spiral bound radical politics/culture zine. Issue 2 has articles on contemporary psychogeography, prisons and resistance in/to prisons, post-structuralist techno, The X-Files as auto-critique, some fiction, some reviews and

some other stuff. From the "aggressive beggars and squeegee merchants of the left" who bring you Autotoxicity you can also obtain the excellent since-ceased-production but still available "Marxist climbing magazine" More Power Now! and the theoretical Communist Headache (£1 each plus SAE). Each issue of Autotoxicity costs £4 including p&p from: ATX, PO Box 298, Sheffield, S1 1NY, UK. A4/48 pages.

BBC Wildlife Magazine is surprisingly radical considering they sell it in every branch of WH Smiths. Very glossy and full of beautiful photographs, plus every issue a round-up of the state of global ecology and a guide to 'what's on in nature' for the month ahead. This isn't a political read but it is useful in order to learn a little more about the ecology we're fighting for and to give yourself a little morale boost. The February '98 issue features

endangered parrots, the harpy eagle of Venezuela, the slowly becoming extinct European mink and a 'for and against' feature on Kangaroo meat. It costs £2.50 an issue or £30 for 12 issues/1 year. Make cheques/POs payable to "BBC Wildlife Magazine" and send to: BBC Wildlife, PO Box 425, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1GP, UK. A4/98pages.

A Ballad Against Work is a free (!) book produced by a group called Kamunist Kranti from India. 'Ballad' tells the story of the inexorable spread of the planetary work machine and emphasises the 'invisible' forms of resistance to it—sabotage, theft etc. The style makes an interesting change from straight theoretical writing—this is much more readable—more of a story. They have also published "Reflections on Marx's Critique of Political Economy". For a copy send an A4 SAE I guess, and I'm sure a donation wouldn't go amiss. Write (with no other mention) to: Majdoor Library, Autopin Jhuggi, N.I.T., Faridabad 121001, India. A4/62 pages.

How Many Rounds Left



In Your Magazine?

information knowledge How **Resources** Who Answers Why

Black and Green is a newspaper published by a collective of biocentric anarchists in the USA. This issue has articles on MOVE, the revolutionary green group that has undergone systematic state harassment and murder in Philadelphia, as well as a piece covering the alienation and ecological devastation caused by technology. For a copy send a donation to: Black and Green, POB 183, Harmony, ME, USA. Tabloid/4 pages.

Black Flag brings you class struggle anarchist news from around the world. Latest issue on Race, Class and Organisation: Anarchism in South Africa, drug gangs and the cops, Noam Chomsky. Still "excitingly irregular" but getting better. Issues cost £1.50 each or £6 for a 4 issue subscription from: BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.

British Wildlife is a magazine for those who want to get a more in-depth appreciation of British natural history and conservation issues. It features long articles based on original research—but is remarkably still readable and accessible to the lay person. Includes an invaluable round-up of conservation and species news, stimulating debate between naturalist anoraks of every persuasion, and much else besides. Some of the views expressed here might not be to EF! tastes, but hell, unanimity is boring! Published bi-monthly, subscriptions are £18.45 for 1 year. Send to: Subscriptions Department, British Wildlife Publishing, Lower Barn, Rooks Farm, Rotherwick, Hook, Hants., RG27 9BG, UK.

Bypass is a bi-annual review mag for self-published zines and comics—like a smaller homegrown version of Factsheet 5. Includes a list of distros and a guide to "zine etiquette" plus loads of excellently nickable graphics to leaven the pages of reviews. Get beyond the mainstream and introduce yourself to the weird world of xerox culture. New one out soon. Costs £2.00 inc. postage from: Bypass, PO Box 148, Hove, BN3 3DQ, UK. A4/36 pages.

The Calendar Riots is a "a work entirely calculated to excite unbridled license in grown persons and promote immorality in the young ones of both sexes; decorated with ten copper plates curiously drawn and elegantly engraved." It is a beautifully produced pamphlet chronicling inspiring acts of resistance, as well as some more esoteric events from the past. The information is organised in the form of a year-long diary (which you can add to—it's interactive, mate!). For a copy send 50p in stamps to: Box B, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RQ, UK. A5/75 pages.

Class War (Number 73) is "an open letter to the revolutionary movement". The final issue of Class War under the old management, ditching the traditional fare of page 3 hospitalised copper for an analysis of what's wrong with the revolutionary movement in this country and why it was decided to disband Class War. Some serious self-criticism of CW and its relation to the left, the media etc. (see also the latest Aufheben). Admirably honest, even-handed and intelligent. Definitely worth reading. (See also the entry for Smash Hits). CW73 costs 50p from: BM Box 5538, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.) Tabloid/16 pages.

Collective Action Notes latest issue (No.13) contains long analytical articles on the Liverpool Dockers, workers' struggles and trade unions in India, France after the '95 wave of strikes and riots, struggles in Canada and a debate with Kamunist Kranti about their Ballad Against Work (see above). Issues cost £1.50 each or £7 for a 4 issue subscription from: PO Box 22962, Balto., MD 21203, USA. Tabloid/28 pages.

Common Sense is the "Journal of the Edinburgh Conference of Socialist Economists", and not as boring as that makes it sound. One of the few outlets for autonomist writings by Harry Cleaver, Toni Negri, Sergio Bologna etc. Interesting reading for those wishing to explore where the class struggle is headed and what the prospects are for revolutionary social change. Issues are £3.95 each. Send to: Common Sense, c/o Werner Bonefeld, Dept. of Politics, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD, UK. A5/89pages.

ContraFLOW is a top free anarcho news-sheet. It covers a wide diversity of struggles and being the London end of the European Counter Network there's lots of good coverage of struggles in Europe as well as stuff nearer home. Plus always cynical, forthright and witty opinions on matters of the moment. Free/donation from: ContraFLOW, c/o 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton Street, London, SE17, UK. Tabloid/6 pages.

Corporate Watch is an investigative mag that comes out every three months or so. Reveals not just corporate doings but the whole structure of big business. The winter '97 double issue contains a series of articles on the media, alternative and mainstream, hanging them around a report on the "GAndALF" trial. Plus stuff on globalisation, and the very scary Multilateral Agreement on Investment plus 48 pages of other excellent articles. From CW you can also obtain the rightfully famous "Corporate Watcher's Address Book" listing the principle and director's home addresses of "over 50 ethically challenged UK corporations". It

costs £3.50 (£2 unwaged) from the same address. Latest (double) issue is £3 or subscriptions are £9 (£6 unwaged) for 6 issues. Make cheques/POs payable to "Corporate Watch" at: Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RQ, UK. A4/48 pages.

Counter-Information is a class struggle anarchist bulletin produced and distributed every few months by an independent collective based in central Scotland. Rather like Do or Die, CI goes for value for money (except unlike us it's free!) by packing as much information on to the paper as is conceivably possible. Loads of news on various struggles from around the world. Send SAE and donation to: Counter Information, c/o Transmission, 28 King St., Glasgow, G1 5QP, UK. A4/4 pages.

The Cruxifyer is a new free anarchist newsletter produced and distributed by a patient from a psychiatric hospital. It is the publication of the Cestre Cantre

Anarchists who are a resistance group based in mental hospitals. The purpose of the newsletter is to be a regular update on occurrences from within the anarchist scene and as such it welcomes all contributions. For a copy send a SAE to: Cestre Cantre Anarchists, c/o Funky Junky, 505-507 Liverpool Road, London, N7 8NS, UK. A4/4 pages.

Delta is an occasional magazine of news and analysis on Shell and the Ogoni in the Niger delta. Number 3 (October '97) contains some excellent background on General Abacha's regime and reports of fightback and sabotage against Shell, plus the role of women in the struggle, Shell's secret history and more stuff on the nightmare of oil capitalism elsewhere in the world (Columbia, Chad, Mexico, Papua New Guinea etc.). "Please send Delta some money" they say—£2 or £3 I would guess, from: Delta, Box Z, 13 Biddulph Street, Leicester, LE2 1BH, UK. A4/40 pages.

Direct Action is the anarcho-syndicalist magazine of the Solidarity Federation. This issue (No. 5, slightly confusingly dated Winter '98) is themed around all things green (rather cringingly called "environmental-rights"), and how this relates to anarchy, the workers, syndicalism and all that. The attempt is interesting but DA still retain definite dinosaur-like qualities in relation to current hot topics like democracy and technology—e.g.: "we seek to take over the means of production not destroy them". Contains lengthy reviews of a selection of radical green literature (including Do or Die!). Plus articles on car culture; anarchism, direct action and utopia; veganism and news from worldwide including Albania and South Africa. For a copy send £2 or £12 for a 6 issue sub. Make cheques to "Direct Action" at: PO Box 1095, Sheffield, S2 4YR, UK. A4/35 pages.

Earth First! Action Update is the monthly newsletter of Earth First! in the UK. Contains a comprehensive list of forthcoming events and regularly includes inserts on important issues such as CS gas, computer encryption, affinity groups etc. Every issue also includes an updated list of every active Earth First! group in the country. Each copy costs 30p with an SAE. A year long subscription costs £5 (£6 international). Cheques/POs/IMOs payable to "Earth First!" Send to: Earth First! Action Update, c/o The Greenhouse, 42-46 Bethal Street, Norwich, NR2 1NA, UK. A4/6 pages.

Earth First! Journal is the 'official' publication of Earth First! in the USA. Our older relative has now been going 17 years, since EF! first started in the States

Radical bookshops

Brighton: Public House Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street, Brighton, BN1 2HQ, UK. Tel: 01273 328 357.

Bristol: Greenleaf, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB, UK. Tel: 0117 921 1369.

Edinburgh: Wordpower, 43 West Nicholson Street, Edinburgh, EH8 4DB, UK. Tel: 0131 662 9112.

Glasgow: Fahrenheit 451, Unit 6, Virginia Galleries, Virginia Street, Glasgow, G1 1TU, UK.

Lancaster: Bookcellar, 9 Meetinghouse Lane, Lancaster, LA1 1TJ, UK. Tel: 01708 381204 or 01524 849313.

Leicester: Littlethorn, 13 Biddulph Street, Leicester, LE2 1BH, UK. Tel: 0116 254 5728.

Liverpool: News From Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool, L1 4HY, UK. Tel: 0151 708 7270.

London: Compendium, 234 Camden High Street, London, NW1 8QS, UK. Tel: 0171 485 8944.

Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DX, UK. Tel: 0171 837 4473.

Manchester: Frontline Books, 1 Newton Street, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1HW, UK. Tel: 0161 236 1101.

Norwich: The Greenhouse, 42-46 Bethal Street, Norwich, NR2 1NA, UK. Tel: 01603 631007.

Nottingham: Mushroom Books, 10-12 Heathcote Street, Nottingham, NG1 3AA, UK. Tel: 0115 958 2506.

Sheffield: Independent, 69 Surrey Street, Sheffield, S1 2LH, UK. Tel: 0114 273 7722.

information knowledge **Resources** Who? What? Why? How? Answers?

back in about 1980. Includes news from EF! on Turtle Island, a good Global News section, plus those essential monkeywrenching tips. Politically rather tame, but despite this definitely worth subscribing to—if only for the big merchandise section (!) Subscriptions are \$35 international surface mail/ \$45 air mail for 8 issues/1 year. Send to: Earth First! Journal Subscriptions, POB 1415, Eugene, OR 97440, USA. Tabloid/30+ pages.

The Ecologist is a bi-monthly journal of lengthy in-depth feature articles. The Ecologist was among the first (back in 1970) to alert us to the ecological crisis, publishing reports like "Blueprint for Survival" and "Whose Common Future?" and is still essential reading today. The Nov/Dec '97 issue has articles on NASA's radioactive Cassini probe, the Kyoto climate conference and village resistance to dam building in Japan. It costs £4 an issue or £24/ £18 concessions for 1 year subscription. Send to: The Ecologist, c/o Cissbury House, Furze View, Five Oaks Road, Slinfold, West Sussex, RH13 7RH, UK. A4/40 pages.

Ecos is the journal of the British Association of Nature Conservationists (BANC), and a hell of a lot more open-minded and questioning than you might think. Collect together articles on 'Community Orchards and Local Agenda 21', large-scale fenland regeneration, and the paradoxical fact that the MoD's hideous biological warfare facility at Porton Down, Wiltshire is also a wildlife treasure trove—and you have a really good read. Single copies/back issues cost £4. Subscription/BANC membership is £19/ £12.50 (student/unwaged). Send to: BANC Membership Services, Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton, NN3 8BE, UK.

Die Eule (The Owl) is a German language radical ecological magazine. It used to be German EF!'s main forum but has now expanded into a general discussion bulletin on a wider range of issues, reaching a satisfying balance of in-depth direct action reports and theoretical reflection (this issue includes pieces on organisation, identity and politics, intellectuality vs. emotionality). Much effort is put into humorous cut and paste production and promoting discussion. Send DM 3.50 (£2.50 including post and packaging) to: Jugendumweltgruppe c/o Infoladen, Brunnenstraße 41, 42105 Wuppertal, Germany. A4/54 pages.

Factsheet 5 is the original and best "big fat guide to the zine revolution". It weighs in at over 120 pages of zine, book and comic reviews and is testament itself to the huge diversity of the underground media. As well as reviews there is also a little zine scene news and

gossip. It costs \$6 for a sample issue or \$20 for a 6 issue subscription. Send to: PO Box 170099, San Francisco, CA 94117-0099, USA. A4/128 pages.

Faslania is the magazine from the Faslane peace camp, opposing the nuclear subs parked in Scotland for 15 years. The winter solstice issue contains camp news, an eviction update, action reports, plenty of Disco Dave's usual lunacy and a critique of the recent CND conference—CND are revealed as being pro-war, just anti-nuke. Free/donation with a SAE from: Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire, Scotland, UK. A4/14 pages.

Festival Eye is the annual bible of festival culture—or its tattered remnants at any rate. An unparalleled guide to (free, cheap and some corporate slime) festivals, related events and actions. Also some interesting general overview articles on the year in question. If you're at a loss for things to do around Spring-Autumn '98, there's plenty of possibilities here. Copies cost £2 with an A4 SAE from: BCM Box 2002, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.

Fifth Estate is the longest running US anarchist magazine. Coming from a position critical of technology and civilisation, the Fifth Estate has for over 30 years published some of the most thought provoking writing around. The latest issue (Fall 1997) has an essay/review by David Watson on the convoluted row between Green Anarchist and the Neoist Alliance (read Stewart Home and his psychogeographical friends) where accusations of eco-fascism fly willy-nilly, which is in effect a 10 page meditation on the primitivist milieu. All credit to an American for trying to decipher the row—we couldn't be bothered. Also includes pieces on Gulf War syndrome, the Detroit paper strike, anarchist art, a letters section and numerous reviews. International subscriptions cost \$10 for 4 issues. Send to: Fifth Estate, 4632 2nd Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201, USA. Tabloid/35 pages.

Fighting Talk is the quarterly magazine of Anti-Fascist Action. Contains news, reports from behind enemy lines, antifa history and more analytical stuff too. Number 11 has an article on the Edelweiss Pirates, a network of young working class gangs who fought the Nazi regime in its early years: "The activities of these groups encompassed a whole range of resistance to the regime (absenteeism from work and school, graffiti, illegal leaflets, arguing with authority figures, industrial sabotage and physical violence)". Issues cost £1.50 and 4 issue subscriptions are £8. Send to: Anti-Fascist Action, BM 1734, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.

information knowledge HOW RESOURCES answers WHO WHY

Genetix Update is a monthly newsletter that has news of the latest developments in genetic science and industry plus news of campaigns to oppose them. Also listings of upcoming events and contact details for local anti-genetics groups. Free/donation from: Genetix Update, c/o PO Box 9656, London, N4 4JY, UK. A4/4 pages.

Green Anarchist is "The most contemptuous document I have ever seen in my entire career" said ex-Major General Judge Selwood, in the "GAndALF" trial. Love it or hate it you just can't ignore this totally no compromise primitivist paper. Because of this, following the "GAndALF" trial (see article in this issue of Do or Die) 3 editors of GA have just been imprisoned for 3 years each for reporting direct action. The current issue covers 'dis/organisation', 'EF! and ecofascism', 'EF! under threat' plus controversy by the bucket load. "For the destruction of civilisation"—as they say. GA costs 75p a copy or subscriptions are £3.75 for 5 issues or £7.50 for 10 issues. (Overseas add 30%). Send blank postal orders only to: Green Anarchist, BCM 1715, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. Tabloid/32 pages.

Green Line combines radical green politics and lifestyle in a compact and accessible Reader's Digest-type format; news shorts followed by long(er) articles. In the latest issue (No.146, Solstice 1997) these are on sustainable housing, Shell's murderous operations in Nigeria and industrial agriculture (hey—snap!). A good overview of the green movement with campaigns news, diary and contacts. Each issue costs £1.50 or subscriptions are £13 (£10 concessions) for 10 issues. Send to: Green Line, PO Box 5, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0YT, UK. A4/20 pages.

Haringey Community Action is the newsletter of the Haringey Solidarity Group. A good example of an autonomous working class community group—they put out 12,000 of these all over Haringey. News on strikes, direct action, campaigns against benefit cuts and for asylum seekers etc. Available for a donation from: PO Box 2474, London, N8 0HW, UK. A4/6 pages.

Here and Now—just when you thought it was safe to go back into the dogma—challenging thinking from a kinda pro-situ angle. Contents includes: "computing, technology, anarchism, media debates, subversive culture, European political scene" or so they say. Here and Now slaughter whole herds of sacred cows in the name of theory, practice and the classless utopia at the end of the rainbow. Issues cost £2 or £4 for a 3 issue subscription. Make cheques/POs payable to "Here and

Now" at: PO Box 109, Leeds LS5 3AA, UK. A4/47 pages.

Howl is the magazine of the Hunt Saboteurs Association. This issue contains stuff on the Countryside Movement and the pro-bloodsports lobby, badgers, stag hunting and a group news roundup plus much more. Issues cost £1.50 from: HSA, PO Box 2786, Brighton, BN2 2AX, UK.

Ignite is the second issue of this free newspaper dishing the dirt on the oil industry was produced for the 100 days of action leading up to the Kyoto climate summit. Ignite is designed to look like the commuter freebie London Tonight and was handed out free around London to confuse and bewilder tired wage-slaves. Contains many stories detailing our current addiction to the greasy black stuff and oil-related profiles of London's prospective Mayors. Plus some great subvertisements for BP, Mercedes, The AA etc. Send an SAE and a donation to: Platform, 7 Horselydown Lane, London, SE1 2LN, UK. Tabloid/19 pages.

Incendiary Devices is a US fanzine containing articles on 'The nonsense of non-violence', prison news, anti-fascist/racist action reports and analysis and an expose of the female contraceptive drug Depo-Provera. A wild anarchist publication that believes, as the last issue (number 4) states: "To monotonously live the mouldy hours of the ordinary people, of the submissive, the accommodated, a life of convenience is not living—it is only vegetating and carrying around an amorphous mass of flesh and bones. To live one should give the exquisite elevation of the rebellion of the arms and the mind." For a copy send a few dollars to: Incendiary Devices, PO Box 22774, Seattle, WA 98122-0774, USA. A5/56 pages.

The Information—where else can you find 'The Moon Landings were a Hoax' conspiracy musings and a slag off of Agenda 21 as a liberal scam together in the same magazine? From the pen that launched a thousand funky green graphics. Off the wall, but perfectly formed. Issues cost £1 from: Dream Power Pictures, PO Box 521, Hove, BN3 6HY, UK

Live Wild or Die! is a wild rampaging publication set up by dissident and ex-Earth First'ers in the USA. It continues to inspire, inform and infuriate with articles in this issue on the collapse of civilisation, veganism, nuclear madness and class war. Submit letters, artwork, rants, poems or names of eco-fuckers for the hit list in issue 7. For a copy send a few dollars to: POB 204, 2425B Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA. Tabloid/54 pages.

information knowledge HOW **Resources** Answers Who WHY

Love and Rage is the "Revolutionary Anarchist Newspaper" with the cool name. It is the bi-monthly paper of the Love and Rage Federation from the USA, Mexico and Canada. Aug/Sept '97 issue on the fight against austerity and welfare cuts, the Zapatistas, the militias and the Oklahoma bombing, forest defence etc. They also publish a Spanish language edition *Amor y Rabia* in Mexico City. An issue costs \$1 and subscriptions are \$13 for 6 issues. Send to: Love and Rage, 2441 Lyndale Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55405, USA. Tabloid/23 pages.

Maximum Rock 'n' Roll is an enormous monthly punk zine with a 10,000 circulation. Champion of the DIY ethic and tireless opponent of the corporate buy-out of that scene. Endless contacts, a doorway into a worldwide subculture, and one that has spawned thousands of angry young anarchists (including me!) Even if the music isn't your thing, the letters and columns alone are worth the price of admission—entertaining, opinionated, peculiar and often informative. Each issue costs \$5.50 and subs are \$33 for 6 issues from: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 - 0760, USA. A4/70 pages.

Moins Vite! is a French language direct action oriented anti-car newsletter from France. Lyon seems to have a thriving radical eco and squatting scene, and was recently host to a conference for car-free cities and coinciding RTS-style action. This looks like it contains some excellent stuff ("La Resistance Physique", "Occupations et Blocages") and it would probably be very informative if my French was up to it. Free/donation from: Maison de l'Ecologie, 4 rue Bodin, 69 001 Lyon, France. A4/16 pages.

Muutoksen Kevät (Spring of Change) is a Finnish radical ecological journal. High quality production and interesting articles make this an excellent publication for those who can read Finnish—although every issue has an English summary on the back page as well. The December 1997 issue has a theme of feminism, women's liberation and gender differences and includes an introduction to the Finnish peace movement, a feminist critique of the Zapatistas and a piece on the anti-environmental movement. Additionally it has reports of animal liberation, ecological, peace and anti-fascist actions and a comprehensive prisoners of war list. For a copy contact: Muutoksen Kevät, PL 847, 33101 Tampere, Finland. Tabloid/23 pages.

Neither Work nor Leisure is an A5 fanzine produced as a supplement to the 'Culture and Language' issue of the glossy and professionally produced magazine

"Towards 2012". This issue focuses on that alienated, soul destroying activity that we all know as work; and with an interesting essay entitled 'Working or a Living', a reprint of the classic 'Abolition of Work' by Bob Black and few other shorter pieces it is well worth reading. Copies are available for a donation and postage from: PO Box HP94, Leeds, LS6 1YJ, UK. A5/35 pages.

Peace News proclaims itself to be "for non-violent revolution". Pacifist publication going since 1936 that exists to support and connect non-violent movements and resistance around the world, as well as to provide a forum where such movements can develop common perspectives. Despite its ideologically hard line pacifism it has some of the best reporting on global, especially European, struggles. Free sample copy or £10 for 11 issue subscription. Make cheques/POs to "Peace News" at: Peace News, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DY, UK. A4/24 pages.

Pobal an Dúlra (Community of Nature) covers weekly green social news from all over Ireland. (See Ireland article in this issue.) For a copy send 20p plus postage

Distributors

If, after checking your local radical bookshop, you have problems getting any of the publications mentioned in this section of Do or Die it is worth getting in touch with the distributors listed below. If you want a catalogue remember to enclose a big SAE with your request.

A Distribution, 84 Whitechapel High Street, London W1 7QX, UK. Anarchist and situ stuff from the people who bring you the annual Anarchist Bookfair.

AK Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE, UK. Probably the biggest radical book catalogue.

Active Distribution, BM Active, London WC1N 3XX, UK. Anarcho-punk central.

Counter Productions, PO Box 556, London, SE5 0RL, UK. Weird, wacked out and political stuff.

DS4A, Box 8, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB, UK. Punk as fuck an' all that class struggle malarky to boot.

Freedom Press, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, UK. Freedom was set up by famous anarchist geezer Kropotkin back in the 19th century—so years of experience here.

Slab-O-Concrete, PO Box 148, Hove, BN3 3DQ, UK. Comics and zines from the Bypass people.

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to: Pobal an Dúlra, Unit 66, Liffey Trust Bldg, 117 Upper Sherriff Street, Dublin 1, Eire. A4/4 pages.

Prevailing Winds is an American investigative magazine covering hidden history, media cover-ups, assassination politics, parapolitics etc. I'm a little suspicious of their fondness for conspiracy theory and the secret state—as some situ geezer once said—"the real state secret is the secret misery of our everyday lives". However, the excellent quality of the other stuff more than makes up for this. Issue 4 contains extracts from Howard Zinn's 'People's History of the United States' as well as stuff on the Zapatistas and US military involvement in Mexico. There are also interviews with Leonard Peltier, Ward Churchill and others about the American Indian Movement, The Black Panthers and the role of the FBI etc. in destroying these movements. Subscriptions are \$32 for 4 issues. Send to: PO Box 23511, Santa Barbara, CA 93121, USA. A4/112pages.

Organise! is the Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation and falls somewhere half way between a theory mag and a newspaper. Current issue contains 'The Criminal Class?', Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, Syndicalism. Also now publishing a bi-monthly news sheet called Resistance. Yours for 20p. Organise! is £1 or £5 for a 4 issue sub. Send cheques/POs/IMOs made to "ACF": c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 7QX, UK.

Reforesting Scotland is the journal of the organisation of the same name. Indispensable for understanding Scottish land issues generally, and the increasingly successful attempts to regenerate the 'Great Wood of Caledon': the tide is turning—an excellent and often inspiring publication. Membership/subscription costs £14 (£7 unwaged) and back issues are £2.50 each. Send to: Reforesting Scotland, 21a Coates Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 7AF, UK.

SchNEWS is an irreverent weekly direct action bulletin produced by a self-confessed "bunch of scruffy rent-a-mob ne'er-do-wells". This is information for action—every piece of news tells you how to get involved, gives you phone numbers, addresses, dates and places. SchNEWS is bursting at the seams with information, but its short enough so that you actually read it and all in that inimitable tabloid style. Free—just send 1st class stamps (e.g.: 20 for next 20 weeks) and a donation if you can afford it to: SchNEWS, c/o PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DX, UK. A4/2 pages.

Sea Shepherd Log is the quarterly newspaper of our favourite posse of whaler-sinking, drift-net trashing,

seal-cub saving manic marine marauders. Need we say more? Membership/subscription costs \$35 (outside USA)—better still; volunteer as crew on one of their boats! Contact Sea Shepherd Conservation Society at: PO Box 628, Venice, CA 90294, USA.

Smash Hits is a "discussion bulletin for revolutionary ideas". Following on from the final issue of Class War (see review above) we now have this new publication that used to be their internal bulletin. The relatively open editorial policy (although no doubt this will cause problems later on) and high quality of writing make it a very worthwhile read for all those interested in changing the world. Free/donation from: BM Box 5538, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. A4/39 pages.

Squall is a quarterly 72 page tabloid magazine for "sorted itinerants"—travellers, squatters, festival-goers, ravers and you and me. Last issue featured the campaign against Manchester's 2nd Runway, CCTV, Reclaim The Streets, Exodus, Columbia, Gorleben among much else. Always some very good journalism and lots of excellent photos. No longer coming out but still worth getting hold of. £2.50 inc. p+p from: PO Box 8959, London, N19 5HW, UK. Tabloid/72 pages.

Stonehenge Campaign Newsletter is pretty much what you'd expect from the title—a useful source of information and campaigning activity on Stonehenge and related issues. Also contains one of the best general contacts listings around and is a good contact point for the national network of FINs—free info sheets to tell you what's going in your area. Quarterly. Send a donation c/o 99 Torriano Ave, London NW5 2RX, UK.

Strong Hearts is an A5 publication put together by Rod Coronado, a Native American, animal liberation and Earth First! activist, currently in prison in the USA. This issue (number 2) is beautifully written and produced and includes articles on the Tupac Amaru, various animal liberation activities and an inspiring first hand account of the sinking of Icelandic whaling ships in 1986. For a copy send a few dollars to: Rod Coronado Support Committee, 3245 E. Patricia, Tucson, AZ 85716, USA. Write to Rod directly at: 03895-000, FCI Unit SW, 8901 S. Wilmot Rd. Tucson, AZ 85607, USA. A5/48 pages.

Subversion is a very impressive free anarchist/left-communist magazine. Contains analysis of the latest happenings in the international class struggle plus lots of open discussion and a big letters section. Recently featured much heated debate on 'green communism'. How do they manage do it for free? Send an SAE to:

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Subversion, Dept. 10, 1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW, UK. A4/23 pages.

Taking Liberties is the paper of the Anarchist Black Cross—a network of groups set up to support class struggle anarchist and revolutionary prisoners as well as people framed by the state or organising on the inside. This is an excellent prisoner support paper which also has good articles on prison protests, deaths inside and international stuff etc. Also ask for their free 'No Comment' booklet—a defendants guide to arrest. Issues cost 30p with an SAE and 4 issue subscriptions are £5 or £3 unwaged. Send to: London ABC, c/o 121 Railton Road, London, SE24 0LR, UK. Tabloid/6 pages.

Temp Slave is an American zine full of personal accounts, stories and letters about various aspects of work, ranging from the hilarious to the emotionally moving. Number 8 contains slag-offs of bosses and mealy-mouthed ass-kissing US workers. Also—temping in a perfect world, temping in a strip joint, travel and temp slavery in Europe. For a copy send a few dollars to: Keffo, POB 8284, Madison, WI 53708-8284, USA. A5/55 pages.

Toxcat is the newsletter of Communities Against Toxics—a national grassroots community initiative of people who have to live with toxic pollution. Excellent, well informed and angry. A subscription to Toxcat also means you get Toxcat special reports free. A years subscriptions are £12. Send to: Toxcat, PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX, UK.

The Verge is a Trans-European youth environmental magazine. Very good on Eastern European stuff with lots of direct action news. The December '97 issue reports on an anti-car conference and actions in Lyon, the huge medical experiment of vaccination, an outline of green politics in Belarus, plus actions from anti-nukes to anti-genetics from Russia to Ireland. Well

worth checking out as in the UK we tend to be rather detached from what's going on on the continent. Subscriptions cost £9 for 6 issues. Make cheques/POs payable to "European Youth Forest Action (Scotland)" at: PO Box 1707, Edinburgh, EH1 1YB, UK. A4/32 pages.

West Country Activist is an irregularly published newsletter reporting on direct action in the South West of the UK. The latest issue (January/February 1998) covers the eviction at Dead Woman's Bottom, an anti-quarry roundup (see article in this issue of Do or Die on quarry fighting in the South West), and various news and views from throughout the whole region. For a 10 issue subscription send 10 second class stamps to: West Country Activist, c/o PO Box 426, Bath, BA1 2ZD, UK. A4/2 pages.

Wildcat is an autonomist Marxist influenced magazine recently converted to an anti-civilisation stance. Number 18 has long articles on the ex-Yugoslavia, prisons, the Oklahoma bombing, civilisation (anti), the Zapatistas (also anti) and an interesting letters section. Always very provoking—you're sure to find something to disagree with somewhere! No longer published but still well worth getting the back issues—incisive thought doesn't date. For each issue send £2.50 (don't mention Wildcat on the envelope) to: BM CAT, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. A4/58 pages.

Y Faner Goch (The Red Flag) is the monthly magazine of the Welsh Socialist Republicans, written in English and Welsh. This is definitely the best read from Wales. Very witty—with such top features as "I can't believe they're not Tories" and "Shits of the Month", plus features on Welsh working class history, the whole devolution thing etc. Send £6 for a 12 issue subscription. Make cheques to "Y Faner Goch" at: Y Faner Goch, PO Box 661, Wreccsam, LL11 1QU, UK. A4/16 pages.





"If pens and paper are the only weapons we have, then we must stab their eyes out with our pens and ram the paper down their throats."

The letters pages are pretty much open access and we will try, space permitting, to print all letters received, providing that they are under 500 words in length. If you want to write longer pieces they will have to be submitted as articles and cannot be guaranteed publication. We will throw away or edit all letters that are over 500 words - you have been warned! Please mark all letters 'For Publication.' Names and addresses will not be printed unless specifically asked for.

Radical Radishes

Re: Earth First! But What Next? (DoD No. 6 - page 18)

As I spend a lot of my time "tending my permaculture plot" these days, I guess that puts me into the category of "burnt out activist", though I hope I've never claimed that "the bits" I "did" in the 70's, 80's and earlier 90's "didn't work". It's just that for many reasons at this particular time in my life, a career in eco-warrioring and D-locking is not an option. It is however possible to remain engaged and committed without being a full time 'front liner'.



My understanding of the definition of permaculture, that is, "creating a permanently sustainable human culture", implicitly means active involvement in the wider community to find bio-regionally appropriate, empowering, and (in the widest sense) spiritually healing solutions to the eco-catastrophe that confronts us. Apart from my own garden and allotments, the plots that I 'tend' include creating from scratch a sensory garden for adults with learning disabilities, involvement with a local primary school's garden project and tree planting with the local Woodcraft Folk, plus I've drawn up a permaculture design for a community orchard of traditionally local fruits that the local council are at least prepared to look at.

The point I'm trying to make is that the Permaculture Movement shouldn't be seen as some sort of retirement club for ex-hunt sabs and past-it digger-divers, rather it is an integral component of the struggle for our planet, complementary to the Direct Action movement and the myriad other strands that give us strength in our diversity. After all, what is the point of "fighting the power"—merely creating a permanent culture of opposition—if we don't at the same time offer practical working alternatives, in the here and now and not only after some ever distant "revolution"?

Sorry teach...

Dear Do or Die,

Have just read the article on the Luddites in DoD No. 6 and it was spoilt for me at least by the footnote 'De-school your kids'. I'm a history teacher and seem to have spent the past few years hearing teachers/the National Curriculum slagged off by activists who are undoubtedly radical, but also unjustifiedly critical, and in many cases misinformed (like the guy who told me the English Civil War was a proletarian revolution!) Have any of these people ever looked at the curriculum documents, or is it part of a general rant against teachers? (Because the Tories made us feel bad enough, thanks, without everyone else turning the knife). I'm currently teaching the history of 19th century popular movements, especially industrial unrest, (including the Merthyr Rising and murder of Dic Penderyn), having just finished teaching a module on the rise of Nazi Germany—with reference to the persecution of witches and gypsies through the centuries. How many parents would want their kids to be "de-schooled" from these histories?

Don't generalise, don't think that because we are paid a wage we are capitalist consumers/establishment puppets. We can't all be there on the frontline, yes some of us in the movement have a responsibility to be there, some of us have a responsibility to teach tomorrow's activists. As the writer of the article says, we can inform future actions by studying past successes and failures. The best way to do this may not be by "de-schooling our kids", but by teaching them the skills to tell capitalist propaganda and social history apart in the first place. A job worth doing, I think.

Another voice from Earth First!

For the Urban Free Commune!

Dear Do or Die,

I was sent a free copy of your latest issue, cheers. I must say though I'm too much of a town lover to go along with the neo-primitivist anti-urban tone of voice that some of the articles seem to be taking. Personally I like towns and cities despite their problems. Human cities existed for thousands of years before serious industrial capitalism and pollution began. Human



urban settlements are as natural as a colony of birds. Isn't neo-primitivism just the same old suburban conservative, anti-proletarian, anti-cosmopolitan anti-urban fear dressed up in radical clothing?

Yours for the urban free commune - P.P.



From an Oxford Aunt...

Dear all,

I'd like to make a few comments on items in Do or Die 6. The cover was powerfully evocative. My own heart rejoiced when I saw those machines burning, it made me realise how much heartbreak I'd buried since the previous March. But the comments about the Newbury reunion in the middle of p.27 are quite mistaken. No way does entering the compound imply tacit support for sabotage—many who did were very upset by the violence they saw. I wouldn't use the word "violence" for careful monkeywrenching. These were emotional and careless acts of revenge. Some people tried to rock a vehicle down a slope while other protesters stood below. Smashing of Portakabin windows served no rational purpose. Balaclavas are part of the culture of violence—if you want to mask up it could be done imaginatively, as some did. According to Schnews some people went as far as unmasking someone's balaclava—and Schnews demanded "this must stop"—spikies [EH?!] whining about fluffies being spiky! That unmasking doesn't sound like tacit support for sabotage. The people on the buses FoE hired were mostly not FoE members, and not everyone on them was cheering. I don't condemn either the violence or those who distanced themselves from it. But a lot of those present who were new to direct action may have been discouraged from getting more involved. I think we need to recognise our own violent feelings and realise that the people we're trying to reach may be very frightened by them—because they're frightened of their own. Power is an awesome thing and is abused by mindlessness.

Far from what the writer on p.19 said, that the fluffy-spiky debate is meaningless and should be dropped, it's a crucial live issue and is hardly being debated at all. I suspect the instinct in our movement to avoid debate

and get on with action is based on folk memory of the way alternative politics in the '70s splintered itself in theoretical warfare. But I think we could learn from the Gandhian idea that everyone, fluffy, spiky, police, security or bystander, has a part of the truth.

The writer on p.19 also calls Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth "reformist" because they've never put the "destabilisation of capitalism" on their agenda—I wasn't aware that EF! had done that either. Isn't the statement of principles in the newsletter, "non-hierarchical organisation, and the use of direct action to confront, stop and reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the earth and its inhabitants", adequate? Greenpeace and FoE may differ from EF! as to the style of organisation and action, but they would agree about stopping and reversing those same forces. While the specifics of those forces can be investigated (a la Corporate Watch), what is behind them is speculation and can only be known when the tactics are found and used that do stop and reverse them. I don't see that Marxist theory has had much success at doing this, so while I'm quite happy for EF!ers to indulge in it, I think it should be remembered that the spirit and character of EF! doesn't require concepts like "capitalism" or the goal of destabilising it. We already have a clearer goal which allows for the free play of each person's instinct and judgement in finding the right actions and right allies.

On a separate note, I was disappointed to see that Oxford Reclaim the Streets action on Fri. 30 June 1995 was left out of the list of actions on page 8. (We could even claim the street cafe action in Broad Street on Sat 11 June 1994 as a forerunner).

One of your Oxford Aunts.

...and an Ultra-Left Uncle.

Dear Earth First!

I have been involved in political struggles for around ten years now and in the recent few years I have learnt much from the "new wave" of ecological direct action. It is partly due to the inspiration that I have got from you all that I went to the Northern Earth First! Gathering in Manchester during October last year. After attending I was greatly disappointed with what I experienced there. I had thought that the Gathering would be a chance for people to get together; discuss the good and bad things, the failures and successes of the previous months and analyse what they were resisting and how to do it more effectively. In actual fact it seemed to be a group of people who seemed more pre-occupied with doing their utmost to avoid all of these discussions—especially ones involving any deeper



analysis and discussion of what they were fighting against and how to do it better.

The most disturbing thing that was lacking from the whole affair was the complete failure to place the ecological struggle into a wider framework of resistance to the whole system. It is not that the ecological destruction that Earth First! focuses on should be ignored, far from it as it is probably the most pressing problem facing us today, but it must be realised that it exists within a particular context. The fact that each and every incident of ecological devastation can be shown to be intricately linked to a wider web of domination that reaches through every layer of society, as well as the natural world, is ignored by almost all of the literature and discussion emanating from your movement.

As well as this there was much talk at the Gathering of getting more people involved, and with myself not being from the same sub-cultural ghetto as most of you seem to be, maybe I can offer a suggestion here. I remember seeing some of the news footage of the direct action at Newbury in early 1996, and at the A30 camps in Devon earlier this year, and being astounded at the political naivete of the people who spoke to the reporters and cameras on the ground—as well as the published demands. Whatever your criticisms of the media when you have a live interview it is stupid not to use it to your best advantage. Waffling on about snails that nobody (rightly or wrongly) really cares about will not cultivate support from anyone bar the most obsessed ecologists—hardly a large percentage of the people in this country.



In addition to this most of the discussion around the construction of the A30 road in Devon seemed to be centred around the fact that it was a DBFO ["Design Build Finance Operate"—privately financed] road. Surely this is beside the point and the real issue is one of the ecological damage that the construction will do—however the road is financed? By focusing on the DBFO side of the scheme, not only will most people who are not 'protesters' probably not relate to that particular aspect, but you unwittingly then legitimise road construction by other financial means; as it reduces the

issue into one where it is perceived that you only have a problem with DBFO financed road construction—not all road construction.

The answer to the question of how to get more people involved is definitely not easy, and I have no answers, but a good start would be to make explicit the connections between ecological destruction and the root cause of it all—the capitalist system that we currently all live under. Do this and the movement will hopefully grow and become increasingly effective. Fail to make the links and you will follow the path that many at the Northern Gathering seem to be taking already; that of a militant liberal lobbying group that's steered by a small number of 'specialist protesters' through an endless maze of compromises and meaningless reforms, with the end result of doing nothing worthwhile bar creating something for the 'elite organisers' to put on their CV.

Wishing you luck and solidarity - D.

Green Lenin anyone?

Dear all,

Last year I had the pleasure of reading the latest Do or Die - an assertive title to a magazine if ever there was one. It was refreshing to read many pieces which concentrated on the nuts and bolts of actions. It's clear that Earth First! is fundamentally about action - getting on with saving the world rather than trying to work out how to save it, or worse, trying to convince other people that only you know how it is to be saved.

I myself spent nearly ten years involved in various forms of direct action before progressing/regressing onto more "adult" activities. I have recently taken my head out of this more mundane world to look again at the world of radical campaigning. Much of it looks so familiar in the sense of having the same weaknesses as the radical peace movement in the early eighties, and no doubt with the various other "hippy" and "post-hippy" movements. These weaknesses have been identified before and many more activists I am sure will be becoming increasingly aware of them.

Let's go through them again. The movement is full of transient activists - mainly young and on their way to an accommodation within the system (i.e. they may for many years hence proclaim radical opinions but this of course is long way from living them - either through direct action and/or structural lifestyle decisions). The movement is individualistic in the classic Thatcherite formulation of the word - "there is no society only individuals". Apart from personal (and often passing) friendships, the average activist has no roots - not in a community, not in a trade, not in a structured organisa-

tion. He/she does actions/jobs; he/she is free from commitment/being coerced. The movement then is itself transient - no more sustainable than the system it wishes to challenge - an outcome of the dysfunctional society which has also created its enemies. This mirror image gives an indication of the profound weaknesses and unsustainability which characterises the new movement.



So... transient, unsustainable, unstructured, uncommitted, unconnected. These are the realities behind the bravado which the movement proclaims. It's radical politics for beginners - loud, passionate, unthinking and ultimately shallow.

And to make these points will in themselves have no effect. I mean some readers will see them as outrageous (in denial), others - more sophisticated - will see them as crude (which of course they are) and wish to deny their essence by pretending to take some of them on board. Others in themselves know them to be true - that the contradictions are creeping into their consciousness - a moment of crisis is approaching.

But still this will change nothing. I could write about these weaknesses in great detail - but the arguments would just get more detailed, look more intellectually impressive, more presentable, palatable - and so would the denials - more detailed, more "clever". Yes it would be all very clever - talkers and scribblers love to be clever. But it won't change anything. This is because the problem cannot be dealt with within the cultural mindset of the radical young thatcherite/anarchist. This mindset is characterised by two immovable characteristics. Voluntarism - "If I don't want to, I won't" - at any moment I reserve the option to do what I want. Nice idea - and oh so radical and oh so ineffective. Secondly, hierarchy denial - "never show initiative - never take a lead - least of all ask for any structured commitment/organisation" - we all know where that leads.

Let's look at another mindset: "reactionary" social theory: Nothing ever happens without leaders, nothing ever happens without power, the basis of social power

is organisation - ongoing structured mutual commitment. Everything else passes and fades. Sure it may get its 15 minutes of fame on entertainment TV. But entertainment is not power. Power is a movement's ability to effect change - to battle against other powers to control resources... and this takes a generation or three.

Let's look at the long-term - a good ecological principle wouldn't you say? After all these young thatcherites have gone to the ground what will be left? Nothing apart from a dusty copy of Do or Die in some university research department. But of course the next generation of crazy radical young thatcherites will be out there playing the same old tune - passionate and ineffective as ever - *deja vu*.

So what are we saying - activism is like drugs - part of the culture of the quick fix. But all else is reaction - Stalinism - right? Wrong.

Once there was a time when anarchism meant something real - not punk, TV culture, young plaything rebellion. It meant life or death - not just the title of a magazine. If you didn't turn up to the meeting you got fined - no messing - this was anarchism in action. Fined, because these guys were serious - because they had to be serious; a wrong collective move meant an early death for a child in a young struggling family; a loss of income for them would make living on £5 a week in this society the height of luxury. These nineteenth century workingmen struggled, organised, were sustainable, were committed (for years not months). and - surprise, surprise - they changed the world. And yet they were democratic, egalitarian and anarchist - how could this be?

In our brave new thatcherite world all this has gone - we are all rich now (when did you last go hungry), and yet we have lost our roots and tradition - no mentors, no respected old people to look up to, no fathers (all off to work we are told).

So how are we to rebuild on these cultural ruins - now one or two have seen that Thatcherism - that modern curse of shallow, rootless, uncommitted and selfish individualism - is living well in the psyches of today's new activists?

Simple. The contract. The deal. Thatcherite words? Not at all. If you want to be in our gang these are the rules. Yes, goodbye "don't tell me what to do", welcome to the institution, welcome to organisation, welcome to explicit roles, explicit egalitarianism/democracy - goodbye informal hierarchy/tyranny.

But who will create this new organisation: the first step on a thousand mile journey back to the days of being fined for turning up late. It will be created by those who are reaching crisis point - where the passion



of genuine social love finally burns through the thin inadequate fabric woven by Thatcher's young followers. This initiation will have nothing to do with democracy. A change of mindset requires a revolution - an assertion, a declaration, not a group/team effort. Real change is an act of courage, defiance. So who will be the Jesus of a new radical environment organisation (not movement)? Will a new Lenin arise and declare for structured organisation - a gang with rules, contracts... and fines for those who turn up late?... answers on a postcard - I don't think. (This is not television).

A Country for Sale?

What do you expect from an article on tribal peoples written by a Catholic parson? ("The Philippines—A Country for Sale" - DoD No.6) Hope you don't expect the truth. What interest would anarchists have in such an article, as the one that has been published on the Igorot peoples, in Do or Die. I don't know.

Luzon as well as the rest of the Philippine archipelago is traditional tribal land of the wandering Negrito hunter-gatherers. It has been gradually occupied by invaders since some 3000 years, similarly as the Americas have been occupied by Europeans since some 500 years or Poland had been occupied by the Germans more recently.

Proto-Malays and Chinese from Fukien reached Luzon some 200 generations ago. As they were hostile against the aborigine people—the Negritos—the invaders flew into the mountainous interior, which is now called the Cordillera mountains. They became the Igorots, that means the mountain peoples. They destroyed the mountain forests for rice terracing, as it had been done in their former homelands. And they killed the Negritos, wherever they could find them.

Today the Igorots and the related Ifugao comprise of a dozen peoples out of more than 50 on the whole Philippine archipelago. Due to intensive rice farming the Igorots denuded the Cordilleras almost completely. They also cleared the Cordilleras from the Negritos. They even grab the land to the remaining few Negrito peoples in northern Luzon which had been opened since some 20 years by commercial loggers. And they continue with the almost completed genocide of the Negritos.

The Igorots are well organised which is much a result of missionaries and development organisations. They became able to market their culture in the international tourist business. This has put them into the position that they are worldwide seen as defenders of tribal cultures and as conservationists. The Cordilleras are rich in minerals and quite a number of Igorots are involved

in and financially benefit from the exploitation. But they demand full control and this led to the movement for autonomy in the '80's.

Igorot leaders speak about genocide on their peoples. There is no reason for that, but on the contrary, the Igorot continue with the genocide on the Negritos. Catholic parsons support them in this.

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There's no leaders without followers...

Dear Do or Die,

I am writing this in reply to the mysterious 'Judith Iscariot' (see 'Do or Die editors dig their own graves' letter on p. 148 in DoD No. 6). Apparently 'the leadership' - nominated by 'Judith' as those involved with publications and most active in EF! - are "drifting into the realms of Monty Python - The Life of Brian...". She continues; "The current obsession with revolution is not radical, but boring". No - the current 'obsession' with revolution is, not only radical, but in this world where the only change worth fighting for is total change, absolutely essential.

She then goes on by saying that if she wanted to dismiss; "the efforts of others outside the narrow margin of what is deemed acceptable I would have joined the Revolutionary Communist Party years ago." Well I suggest that she may actually be better off with a spell in the RCP. At least they have a wider (albeit flawed) political analysis of society - something that 'Judith' seems to be lacking entirely.

'Judith' concludes with the suggestion that "[w]e have to embrace other environmental groups, otherwise we will always be isolated, marginal and pathetic." Well if she is saying that being active in EF! should involve favouring lingering hugs with Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, WWF (and other such piecemeal reformist 'green' bureaucracies) over making links between, and working with, revolutionaries across the world then she should purchase a nice field with her 30 pieces of silver and...

Love and kisses - Jesus Christ.

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Philippines



For contact details for publications see page 149, distributors page 155, radical bookshops page 152, prisoners page 136, video activism page 8, and direct action camps page 54. Send updated contact details to:
Do or Die, c/o South Downs Earth First!, PO Box 2971, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2TT, UK.

THAT'LL BE £3.25.
WOULD YOU LIKE
A BAG?

full
stomach from
long grazing
session

full
pockets for
later

dog
paniers

Shopper's Little Helper
- conveniently below
cashier's view

THE HIDEOUS EXPERIENCE
OF SUPERMARKET OR
SUPERSTORE SHOPPING IS
SLIGHTLY RELIEVED BY
THE EASY ACCESS TO
FREE FOOD & OTHER
PROVISIONS - JUST LIKE
IT SHOULD BE....

LET'S GO SHOPLIFTING

THE BUSINESS OF BUSINESS IS THEFT.
EVERY BIT OF PROFIT MADE IS STOLEN.
WHEN YOU BUY THEY STEAL YOUR MONEY. WHEN
YOU WORK IT'S EVEN WORSE - THEY STEAL YOUR
TIME. AND THEN THEY GIVE YOU A LITTLE BIT
OF MONEY WHICH SOMEONE ELSE STEALS.
THEY'VE BEEN ROBBIN' YOU BLIND ALL YOUR
LIFE - NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE A LITTLE BIT BACK.



"Excuse me son,
I saw you pocket
some of those
goodies by the till.
Empty your pockets."

"I'm sorry mister,
I didn't even want
them before I got
in here."

but don't
shoplifters
make prices
higher for
everyone
else?

wot about
small or non-
profitmaking
businesses?

shoplifters
don't cause high
prices -
businesses do.

They don't raise
their prices to
"cover losses"
they do it
to protect
their
profits.

If a business is
really owned & run
by the people who work
there, and they are anti-profit,
I say don't rip them off. Use your own
head. The bigger businesses deserve
it the most & every system
has its weaknesses -
so figure
out

DISCRIMINATE
those
who
deserve it
most

ROB
YOUR
BOSS
they
rob from
you

COMPARE
check
out
different
security systems

NETWORK
exchange
tips
and don't get caught!

how
to
exploit them
for your own
ill-gotten
gain.

Malcontents

These Islands...

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"They're all just a load of alcoholic anarchists."

- Christopher Chope (Roads Minister 1990-1992)